

## COMPETITION FORMAT

### A Format

#### 1. Round-Robin

- Wildcard teams will be used as necessary to bring age divisions to an even number of teams.
- Teams are not seeded. State Champions and Premier League teams are placed within the brackets by random draw, conducted at the US Youth Soccer Workshop.
- Each age group will be divided into three or four team sub-groups. The teams in each sub-group will play three preliminary round-robin games according to established matrices. Advancement to the quarter-final or semi-final round will be determined as follows.

#### 2. Quarter-Finals

- Quarter-finals will be played in divisions of 16 teams.
- Quarter-finals are single elimination format. Winners of the quarter-final matches will advance to the semi-finals.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, two complete overtime periods will be played at the end of normal playing time. The duration of the overtime periods will be two 10 minute halves for U13 and U14 and two 15 minutes halves for U15 and older.
- If at the end of the overtime periods a tie still exists, the game result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with FIFA rules.

#### 3. Semi-Finals and Finals

- Games are single elimination format. Winners of the semi-final will advance to the final match.
- There are no consolation games to determine 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place. The teams that do not advance from the semi-finals will be awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place.
- In 12 team groups, teams from the same bracket, or teams that have already played each other in the round-robin, will not play each other in the semi-final games.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, two complete overtime periods will be played at the end of normal playing time. The duration of the overtime periods will be two 10 minute halves for U13 and U14 and two 15 minutes halves for U15 and older.
- If at the end of the overtime periods a tie still exists, the game result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with FIFA rules.

#### 4. Day of Rest

- u14, u15, u16, u17, u18 divisions will receive a day-of-rest prior to either their quarter or semi-final match.

#### B Playing Matrix

##### 1. 12 Team Division

A	B	C
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12

- No quarter-final will be played.
- Semi-final #1: Winner A v Wildcard
- Semi-final #2: Winner B v Winner C
- If the Wildcard comes from Group A, then Winner A v Winner C and Winner B v Wildcard.

##### 2. 16 Team Division

A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

Quarter-finals will be played.

- Winner A v 2<sup>nd</sup> B
- Winner B v 2<sup>nd</sup> A
- Winner C v 2<sup>nd</sup> D
- Winner D v 2<sup>nd</sup> C

The winners of each quarter-final will play in the semi-finals.

- Semi-final #1: Winner A v 2<sup>nd</sup> B v Winner C v 2<sup>nd</sup> D
- Semi-final #2: Winner B v 2<sup>nd</sup> A v Winner D v 2<sup>nd</sup> C



## **C Wildcard**

1. Age groups will consist of either 12 or 16 team divisions. To meet these requirements, wildcards will be added if necessary.
2. One wildcard team per state, per tournament, will be selected unless no other state can fill the open slot.
3. Procedure for wildcard selection:
  - State notifies the RTC that it will not be able to fill their state's slot in an age group.
  - A wildcard will be selected to fill the open slot.
  - Order of selection of wildcards:
    1. Host state
    2. #1 state in random draw for age/gender group
    3. #2 state, #3 state, etc.

A state may decline a wildcard slot in any age/gender division, and the order selection proceeds. Pairings will not be changed to accommodate states. A state's team and wildcard team may be in the same bracket.

## **D Premier League**

In the U14-U18 age groups, the Premier League will receive four Premier League slots bringing the number of teams in these age groups to 16 teams.

Pairings will not be changed to accommodate states. A state's team and PL team may be in the same bracket

## **E Game Cards**

The official records of the tournament are the game verification report signed by both team officials at the field and the referee match report submitted to the RTC.

## **F Game Balls**

Each team shall be able to provide a game ball at each game. The game ball for each age group must meet US Youth Soccer requirements. Once the game begins, a protest cannot be lodged because of an illegal ball.

## **G Grace Periods**

Any team not ready to play at the scheduled start time shall be granted a fifteen (15) minute grace period. Any team not ready to play after this grace period has expired shall be reported to the RTC by the referee. The RTC shall decide when a forfeit is declared. A minimum of seven (7) players constitutes a legal team.

## **H Home Team/Visiting Team**

The home team will wear light colored jerseys and socks. The visiting team will wear dark colored jerseys and socks. The team in the incorrect color will have to change.



## **I Decorum**

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of themselves, their coaching staff, parents/spectators, and their players. Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in this policy, including cautions, ejections and standard suspension. Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a team, such as relatives and spectators, are also subject to the jurisdiction and authority of US Youth Soccer and the Southern Regional Tournament.

## **J Team and Spectator Location**

The teams will sit on the opposite side of the field from the spectators. Teams will be separated by the table/bench/chairs for the officials. Spectators are to remain on the half of the pitch across from their own team's bench.

## **K Team Bench and Sidelines**

1. Players and up to 4 club-specific credentialed team officials may be on the bench. The credentials will be issued at registration.
2. Non-game day rostered players may sit on the bench and must wear clothing distinct from game-day uniform.
3. Each team may order a maximum of four (4) bench passes.

## **L Uniforms**

Each player must wear an official uniform with a number on the back of the jersey. Numbers are not required on goalkeeper jerseys. Duplicate numbers are not permitted.

At every level of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series, a player or team official at a game site to participate in a game of the competitions may only have on the outer wear of the player or team official a name, logo, or other identifying mark of a youth soccer organization that is US Youth Soccer, a State Association or other member of US Youth Soccer, a member of a State Association, or an organization that is a member of an organization that is a member of a State Association. A name, logo, or other identifying mark of any other youth soccer organization must be removed, replaced, or covered before the player or team official may continue to remain at the game site for the game.

## **M Equipment**

All players must wear shin guards.

## **N Player/ Team Official Passes**

Before each game, the referee or linesman will receive the player passes for each player from a team official. The passes will remain with them for the duration of the game. It will be the responsibility of the team official to obtain his or her passes at the end of the game.

Coaches must have their US Youth Soccer pass on them at all times while on the bench.



If teams' US Youth Soccer passes cannot be produced at the start of a game, the RTC will determine appropriate actions.

## **O Determination of Winners**

### **4. Scoring Method in Round-Robin**

In preliminary round-robin games, points will be awarded as follows:

Win - 3 points

Tie - 1 point

Loss - 0 points

There will be no overtime played during the round-robin portion of the tournament.

## **P Advancement**

The team earning the most points in each group will advance to the next round of the tournament. In groups of 12 teams, the team with the most points after the group winners are declared will advance as the wildcard. In groups of 16 teams, the teams with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest points in each bracket will advance as the best 2<sup>nd</sup>.

In groups where crossover games are scheduled, only the game points earned within the bracket will count in determining the bracket winner. To determine the wildcard team all game points earned, including crossover game points, will count.

## **Q Tiebreakers**

5. In the event that teams are tied on the basis of points, the following tiebreakers will be considered in order until the tie is broken:
  1. Winner of head-to-head competition. (This criteria is not used if more than two teams are tied.)
  2. Most wins.
  3. Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD), which is computed as 'goals for' minus 'goals against' with a maximum of 4 NGD in each game.
  4. Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker).
  5. Team with the most goals (maximum of 4 goals in each game).
  6. Kicks from penalty spot per FIFA Laws of the Game.
6. More than Two Teams Tied



If more than two (2) teams are tied, the sequence will be followed until a team is eliminated. The remaining teams will then restart the sequence at Q2 above, until the tie is broken.

If three teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw by the Region III Tournament Committee. The first team drawn will receive the bye; the next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of FIFA kicks. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in FIFA kicks to determine the winner. The bye team will be the home team.

If four teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw conducted by the Region III Tournament Committee. The first team drawn (home team) will compete against the 2<sup>nd</sup> team drawn (away team) in the first contest of FIFA kicks. The third team drawn (home team) will compete against the fourth team (away team) in the second contest. The winners of these two contests will then compete to determine the winner. The winner of first/second draw will be the home team.

The same tiebreakers will be used to determine wildcard teams.

#### **R Forfeiture Rule**

In the event a team in round-robin competition forfeits any match, the official game scores for all of that team's games will be recorded as 4-0 losses. A team that forfeits a match will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.

#### **S Unfinished Games**

Unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed providing neither team is at fault and play has not begun in the second half. If play is stopped after completion of the first half, and cannot be resumed as determined by the RTC, and provided neither team is at fault, the Region III Tournament Committee may deem the game complete. Should play be stopped at any time due to one of the teams being adjudged at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the Southern Regional Tournament Committee as to whether the game is to be replayed, stand as is, or declared a forfeit.

#### **T Terminated/Suspended Games**

Once play has begun, games may only be terminated/suspended by the RTC or his/her representative.

### **1.2 EJECTIONS**

#### **A Player Ejection:**

1. Either a credentialed team representative or State Representative must escort a player who is sent off from the field to the designated red card holding area.
2. The player's pass, together with the referee report, shall be turned over to the RTC or his/her designee by the referee.



3. The minimum penalty for an ejection is that the player shall not be permitted to play in the immediate next competition match of his or her team. This penalty may be increased at the determination of the Region III Conduct Committee.
4. Any appeal of an increased suspension by the Region III Conduct Committee must be submitted in writing to the Region III Appeals Committee within two hours of notification of increased suspension.
5. If the team of an ejected player allows the player to participate in the game he or she is to be sitting out, that team will automatically forfeit the game.
6. A player is allowed to serve their suspension at the game on the team bench, provided they are not in uniform.
7. A member of the RTC or their designee shall notify the player's State Representative of the send-off. The player's pass shall be returned to the State Representative following the disciplinary period.

**B Coach or Credentialed Team Representative:**

1. If a coach or credentialed team official is ejected from any game, they will be escorted by the State Representative out of sight and sound of the field and may not coach another team during the time slot for which they were ejected. The ejected coach or credentialed official may not be in sight or sound of the field while serving their suspension.
2. The minimum penalty for an ejection is a one game suspension to be served in the next US Youth Soccer championship game played by the team where the ejection was received.
3. The penalty may be increased at the determination of the Region III Conduct Committee. Any appeal of an increased suspension must be submitted in writing to the Region III Appeals Committee within two hours of notification of the increased suspension.
4. Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a team, such as relatives and spectators, are also subject to the jurisdiction and authority of US Youth Soccer and the Southern Regional Tournament.

**C Player and Coach Suspension**

Any player, coach or bench personnel who has been suspended may appeal the decision to the Region III Tournament Appeals Committee. This appeal must be made within two hours of notification of the suspension.

**1.3 SUBSTITUTIONS**

The number of substitutions shall be unlimited. Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee, at the following times:

1. Prior to a throw-in in your favor.



2. Prior to a goal kick by either team.
3. After a goal by either team.
4. After an injury by either team when the referee stops play.
5. At half time.
6. When the referee stops play to caution a player, only the cautioned player may be substituted prior to the restart of the game.
7. Player Equipment

The referee is the sole judge of allowed player equipment as prescribed by the FIFA Laws of the Game.

## 1.4 PROTESTS

All questions relating to the qualifications of the competitors or interpretation of the rules, or any dispute or protest shall be referred to the Region III Tournament Protest Committee.

### A Validity

To be valid and eligible for consideration:

1. All protests relating to the ground, goal posts, bars or other appurtenances of the games shall be entertained only if a written objection has been lodged with the referee and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
2. All protests must be filed in writing with the Chair of the Protest Committee or his/her representative within two hours of the completion of the game in protest and must include:
3. A fee in the amount of \$300. This fee may be in cash, cashier's check or money order. Personal checks will not be accepted. Checks or money orders must be made payable to US Youth Soccer Region III.
4. Full particulars of the grounds on which the protest is lodged.

### B Timing

1. Game situations

Notification of protest must be received by the chair of the Protest Committee or his/her or designee within two hours of the completion of the game being protested.

2. Non-game situations

Notification of protest must be received by the chair of the Protest Committee or his/her or designee within two hours of completion of the last game in the bracket or division in question, whichever is latest.

### C Procedures

The committee shall immediately upon the receipt of a protest notify the team against which the protest is made and shall give a copy of the protest and all particulars to that team, which will then have the right to defend its case, with or without witnesses. A written response must be made within 2 hours of notification.



A plea of ignorance to the rules and policies of the US Youth National Championship Series and/or the US Youth Soccer Southern Regional Championships is not sufficient grounds for protest. Judgment decisions of the referee are not subject to protest.

The committee shall compile the necessary information to hear the protest from all available sources, before the protest is heard. This shall include, but not be limited to, coaches, field marshals, referees, assessors, witnesses if necessary, etc. All materials will be treated with confidentiality.

After compiling the necessary information, the committee will meet to conduct the protest hearing. The decisions of the committee shall be binding on all parties.

The Region III D&P Committee will notify the parties of the committee's decision.

## **1.5 APPEALS**

The decisions of the Southern Regional Tournament Committee and the Tournament Conduct and Protest Committees may be appealed to the Tournament Appeals Committee. The appellant shall bear the burden of showing that the decision being appealed is clearly erroneous. No new evidence may be presented to the Appeals Committee unless circumstances have materially changed, or new facts are discovered that were unavailable at the time of the original hearing.

- A An appeal must be filed in writing with the Chairman of the Appeals Committee or their representative within two hours of notification of the Conduct or Protest Committees decision and include:
  - 3. A fee in the amount of \$500. This fee may be in cash, cashiers check or money order. Personal checks will not be accepted. Cashiers checks and money orders must be payable to US Youth Soccer Region III.
- B Ignorance
  - 4. A plea of ignorance to the rules of the competition is not sufficient grounds for appeals or protests.
- C Judgment decisions
  - 5. Judgment decisions of the referees are not subject to appeal or protest.

## **1.6 LAWS OF THE GAME**

Except as otherwise provided herein, the rules of US Youth Soccer and FIFA Laws of the Game shall apply.

