

Tournament Rules



2024 Gulf Coast Invitational February 9-11, 2024 Tampa, FL

Registration and Team Eligibility

The tournament shall be open to all teams comprised of properly registered youth players (as defined by the rules of the affiliated organization) in all age groups listed in the "Tournament Rules", provided such team is in good standing with its youth association

Player Age and Eligibility

The player's playing age is determined by the following guidelines for 2023/2024.

U9	Born on or after 1/1/2015	U15	Born on or after 1/1/2009
U10	Born on or after 1/1/2014	U16	Born on or after 1/1/2008
U11	Born on or after 1/1/2013	U17	Born on or after 1/1/2007
U12	Born on or after 1/1/2012	U18	Born on or after 1/1/2006
U13	Born on or after 1/1/2011	U19	Born on or after 1/1/2005
U14	Born on or after 1/1/2010		

*Each team will be allowed to have guest players, who are properly registered through their National and State Association, federation or any other USSF affiliated organization. Guest players must have permission to participate/travel from their National and State Association, Federation or any other USSF affiliated organization.

*Players may NOT play for more than one team in the tournament

Team Check-In

Tournament officials shall conduct all credential checks:

- At initial registration

All teams must check in online. Please visit www.smctournaments.com for more information.

Guest Players

All teams will be allowed up to 5 guest players. Guest players should be written in on your roster and player card needs to be provided. If the guest player is from another club, a guest player form must be filled out and submitted.

Max Roster Size

U9-U10	(12)
U11-U12	(16)
U13-U19	(22) *only 18 players can dress per match

Heading Rules

- Deliberate heading is not allowed in age groups U12 and younger
- If a U12 or younger player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.
- If the deliberate header of a U12 or younger player occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infraction occurred.

Concussions

Pursuant to Florida Statutes (FS 943.0438) Florida in 2012 enacted a very stringent Head injury and Concussion Law. If the referee (or assistant referee) believes that, in his/her opinion, a player has suffered a head injury or possible concussion, the match must be stopped IMMEDIATELY. The injured player if able to leave the field on their own must be escorted to their coach and the coach must be told that the player cannot return for the duration of the match. If a trainer is brought onto the field because the player is incapacitated, the referee must still notify the coach that the player cannot return to the game. It is the responsibility of the coach and the player's parent(s) or legal guardians to seek medical attention. The player may not resume participation until he/she has been cleared by a medical doctor. The Referee HAS NO FURTHER responsibility beyond removing the player from the match in which the player was injured. The referee crew must ensure, that UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES or due to the appeal from any coaching staff that the player is allowed to return to the game.

7v7 rules

- No heading
- No punting
- No dropkicks
- We will use build out lines (midfield line will be used if no build out line is painted)
- Offside will be called using build out lines (midfield line will be used if no build out line is painted)
- 1 referee per game (Assistant Referees will be used when available)

Build Out Line

- When the keeper has the ball, the opposing team must retreat behind the build out line
- The opposing team may cross the build out line once the ball is in play*
 - *When the keeper releases the ball from his/her hand the ball is in play
 - *On goal kicks, the ball is in play once the ball is kicked
 - *Please note that if the keeper releases the ball prior to the opposing team retreating completely behind the build out line, the opposing team may attack the ball.

9v9 rules

No heading

Laws of the Game

All matches must be played in accordance with the FIFA laws of the Game, except as specifically modified in the Tournament Rules.

- **LAW 1: Field of Play**
U9-U10 (7v7) and U11-U12 (9v9) must play in accordance with the US Soccer Official under 12 & 10 Playing Recommendations.

U13-U19: No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game"
- **LAW 2: The Ball**
U9-U12 Size 4

➤ **LAW 3: Number of Players**

U9-U10	(7) per side
U11-U12	(9) per side
U13-U19	(11) per side

➤ **LAW 4: Players Equipment**

402.2 Player equipment shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Affiliate and FIFA rules. Additionally: a) Screw in cleats are permitted; however, judgement as to their safety is at the discretion of the referee. B) Orthopedic casts can be worn at any sanctioned tournament with written approval from a doctor and written permission from a tournament official, final judgement as to its safety is at the discretion of the referee.

It is the tournament policy that no player be allowed to wear ANY jewelry while participating in any sanctioned match. The only exception that may be allowed is a medical alert bracelet or necklace when taped to the body. The referee shall make the decision as to the safety of the player and the referee's decision is final.

Teams will wear uniforms of matching design and color with a minimum of six (6) inch numbers affixed to the back of the uniform shirt

The designated home team per the tournament schedule should wear white or light color jerseys. The designated away team per the tournament schedule should wear dark color jerseys. The designated home team per the tournament schedule will be required to change jerseys if there is still a conflict. In cases where the schedule does not designate a home team the first team listed on the game report will be the considered home team.

The uniform of the goalkeeper must be distinctly different in color from the basic colors of the competing teams and the referee.

➤ **LAW 5: The Referee**

The center referee for all matches must be certified by the Federation.

Referees are required to submit a completed USSF or a tournament specific game report to the Site Director containing any information relating to any game incidents involving players/coach, spectator misconduct, or injuries.

In the event the assigned referees fail to appear, and the assignor and/or Site Director fails to provide a replacement, the senior assigned assistant referee shall assume the duties and shall find a alternate assistant. The game will be played as scheduled and will be deemed official.

Substitutions

Substitutions shall be unlimited, except as noted below. Substitutions may be made only upon proper notification of the referee through the linesman, with the referee's permission, at the following times:

- Throw ins (non-possession team is permitted to substitute if possession team substitutes
- On goal kicks
- After a goal by either team
- After an injury, by either team, (one for one) when referee stops play
- At the beginning of the second half or overtime periods

The substitute shall not enter the field of play until the player he/she is replacing has left, and then, only after receiving a signal from the referee.

➤ **LAW 6: Assistant Referee**

Two (2) assistant referees will be used in matches U11 and above. In the event, the assigned assistants(s) fail to appear, the referee must find suitable replacements. The game will be played as scheduled and be deemed official.

➤ **LAW 7: Duration of the Match**

Age	Game Length	Overtime
U9-U10	2x25=50	No overtime, directly to "Kicks from the Penalty Mark"
U11-U12	2x30=60	No overtime, directly to "Kicks from the Penalty Mark"
U13-U19	2x35=70	No overtime, directly to "Kicks from the Penalty Mark"

*Note: Kicks from the penalty mark will only be taken in semi-final and final matches

➤ **LAW 8-10:**

No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game"

➤ **LAW 11: Offside**

No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game"

U9-U10 offside will be called using the build out line (midfield line will be used if no build out line is painted)

Tournament and Match Schedules

This tournament is designed as follows for all age groups and gender:

- All teams are guaranteed a minimum of 3 scheduled games
- Maximum number of games is 4
- Teams can play up to 2 games per day

Post-Game Procedures

As a mutual courtesy, both teams will meet at the center circle and congratulate each other for a game well played. Manager/coach of both teams will ensure their respective sideline areas are clean and that all trash is in containers.

Control of Sideline Conduct

Players, reserve players, managers, coaches, and fans are expected to conduct themselves within the letter and spirit of "Laws of the Game". The site director has the authority and the responsibility to remove any person(s) from the tournament for abuse of conduct, in addition to any specific disciplinary action brought by any other authority.

The site director will designate one sideline to be for the sole use of the players listed on the game roster and a maximum of three (3) managers/coaches/trainers from each team, with one team occupying one side of the midfield and one team, the other. While the game is in progress the manager/coach/trainer and the reserve players must remain on their respective benches and may not roam the sidelines. The tournament director will designate the opposite sideline for the spectators. No one will be allowed behind either end line.

The manager/coach will be responsible for the behavior of their fans and the referee will have the authority to warn and ultimately send off, any manager/coach whose fans behave in an abusive or disruptive manner.

ARTIFICIAL NOISE-MAKING DEVICES ARE PROHIBITED

Conduct and Discipline

It shall be solely the team's responsibility to determine the status of its players. Any suspension from a tournament, local league, etc. is the responsibility of the team to notify the tournament director of this suspension at the time of the player's check-in.

Red Card suspension or send off suspensions can only be served with the team with which the suspension was earned in games played by their team. Players MAY NOT serve suspensions as "guest players".

Tournaments will have a discipline committee of no less than three (3) members. The discipline committee will review and rule on all reports of unacceptable conduct by players, manager, coaches, referees, spectators, etc.

A player, manager, or coach ejected will have an automatic minimum one (1) game suspension regardless of the cause of ejection.

A coach who is ejected must leave the park area immediately (out of sight and sound). Failure to comply will result in suspension from the entire event and jeopardize inclusion into future events. Suspended Coaches may be located on the spectator side of the field but may not coach or communicate with the team in any manner; players may sit with the team but may not be in uniform.

Depending on the severity of the unacceptable conduct, the discipline committee may recommend the suspension of up to the duration of the tournament with further disciplinary action by the appropriate national and State Association, Federation or any other USSF affiliated organization. The discipline committee recommendations will be available to the affected parties no later than before their next scheduled game.

Determination of Group Winners

In group play, there will be no overtime games. Standings in a group will be determined by:

- 6 points for a win
- 3 points for a tie
- 0 points for a loss
- 1 point for a shutout
- 1 point for every goal scored up to 3 goals per game

*Max points you can get per game is 10 points

If two or more teams are tied after group play, then the following tie breaker rules will apply:

1. Head to head competition (if two or more teams are tied, skip to #2)
2. Most Wins
3. Goal Differential (max of 5 per game)
4. Goals Against
5. Goals Scored
6. Most Shutouts
7. Penalty kicks

If all 3 teams remain tied after Step 6, then a coin toss will determine which team sits out for the first round of "Kicks from the Penalty Mark". The winner of the first round of "Kicks from the Penalty Mark" will then take on the team that sits out to determine a winner.

Determination of Semi-Final and Finals

In head to head competition, if the game is not decided after regulation time, penalty kicks will be taken in accordance with FIFA "Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark".

NOTE: Teams may be asked to move to a designated Penalty Kick area to permit the next scheduled game to proceed.

Division Structure

3 teams – Each team will play the other two teams in the group. On Sunday, #2 will play #3 in the Semi-Finals. The winner of the Semi-Final will play #1 in the Final.

4 teams – Each team will play the other three teams in the group. #1 will play #2 in the Final.

5 teams – On Saturday, each team will play two group games (opponents determined at random). On Sunday, #4 will play #5 in the Consolation. #2 will play #3 in the Semi-Finals. The winner of the Semi-Final will play #1 in the Final.

6 teams – One group of six. Each team will play three group games (opponents determined at random). #1 will play #2 in the Final.

6 teams (2 Finals) [U10 Boys Gold/Silver] – One group of six. Each team will play three group games (opponents determined at random). #1 will play #2 in the Gold Final. #3 will play #4 in the Silver Final

7 teams – Bracket A will have three teams. Bracket B will have four teams. On Saturday, each team will play two group games. On Sunday, Bracket A#3 will play Bracket B#4 in the Silver Semi-Finals. The winner of the Silver Semi-Finals will play Bracket B#3 in the Silver Final (5th place game). There will be no awards given to teams in the Silver Final (5th place game). Bracket A#1 will play Bracket B#2 and Bracket A#2 will play Bracket B#1 in the Semi-Finals. The winner of the Semi-Finals will play in the Final.

*7 team brackets are subject to change

8 teams – Two groups of four. Each team will play the other three teams in their group. Bracket A#1 will play Bracket B#1 in the Final.

8 teams (2 Finals) [U9 Boys] – Two groups of four. Each team will play the other three teams in their group. Bracket A#1 will play Bracket B#1 in the Final. Bracket A#2 will play Bracket B#2 in the Silver Final.

Forfeits

A minimum of seven (7) players constitutes a game for U13 and above. A minimum of 4 players constitutes a game for U9-U10 and a minimum of 6 players for U11-U12. A team shall be allowed a ten (10) minute grace period from the scheduled match time before awarding the game to their opponents. A team “walking off” the field during the game shall be considered to have forfeited. No team that has forfeited a game shall be eligible for semifinal or final games. A team that forfeits shall have a game score of 3-0 awarded to their opponent. If both teams fail to appear they shall both be charged with a loss and charged three (3) goals scored. IF MAX GOAL DIFFERENTIAL IS MORE THAN 3 PER GAME THEN THE FORFEIT SCORE WILL MATCH THE MAX GOAL DIFFERENTIAL.

Protests and Disputes

There will be NO PROTESTS. Decisions by referees may not be appealed. All disputes will be resolved immediately by the Site Director. These decisions will be Final.

External Conditions, Weather, ETC.

Regardless of weather conditions, players and coaches must be on the field at the scheduled time, ready to play. In case of inclement weather or field conditions, games may:

- Be shortened – The tournament Director may reduce the length of matches due to weather conditions before the start of a match; all such matches will be considered official.
- Be rescheduled (time and location determined by Tournament Director).
- Go to “Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark”. (Time and location determined by Tournament Director)
- Be canceled

Only referees or the Tournament Director can suspend a match already started due to weather conditions. Any one single suspension of a match may last no longer than 60 minutes or to the next scheduled game start time, whichever is later.

In case of extreme weather (heat/humidity), a break will be given at the midpoint of each half of regulation time and at the end of each overtime period (if played) for player hydration. This break will be given at a normal stoppage of play and it is mandatory for any sanctioned match during which the air temperature is or is expected to reach 85 degrees.

Terminated Games

Games terminated for other than inclement weather, i.e. violent or uncontrollable situations will not be replayed.

The decision as to the score of such games and whether teams advance will be made by the Tournament Director after receiving reports from game officials. The decision of the Director will be final and is binding on all parties.

Championship Final Ceremony

Following the completion of each championship game, the two competing teams will present themselves to the Tournament Director for awards.

General

The host club, Tournament Director, Committee, and Tournament Sponsors will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any team due to the cancellation in part or in whole of this tournament.

The Tournament Director's interpretation of the foregoing rules and regulations shall be final.

The Tournament Director has the responsibility to uphold any previous suspension imposed. Coaches and players committing breaches of the law may be ejected from the tournament at the discretion of the tournament committee.

Tournament Refund/Cancellation Policy

After a team is accepted, then no refunds will be issued. Exceptions are found on the link below:

Refund Policy – [CLICK HERE](#)

Refund policy

Any tournament that fails to return an entry fee and application within fifteen (15) days after notification that the team is not accepted, or within ten (10) days of withdrawal request of the application by a team prior to the acceptance of that application by the tournament, will be subject to an assessment fine not to exceed ten (10) times the original entry fee.

- A. Within five (5) days after notification that the team is not accepted by their application
- B. Within five (5) days upon cancellation of the tournament
- C. Within ten (10) days of withdrawal request of the application by a team prior to acceptance of that application by the tournament.

Any team that will not be permitted to play in the contracted age group shall have the option to withdraw and receive a full refund of all entry fees. All tournaments shall notify any participant not less than fifteen days prior to the beginning of the tournament if any age group advertised will not be offered.