



# 2026 FLORIDA STATE INVITATIONAL

FSU Sportsplex  
3950 Tyson Rd, Tallahassee, FL 32310  
Tournament Director: Lee Blenman  
March 27-29, 2026

## TOURNAMENT RULES

The rules of this tournament shall be in accordance with US Youth Soccer and FYSA except as modified and approved herein.

## TEAM ELIGIBILITY

This tournament shall be open to all teams comprised of properly registered youth players in all age groups indicated on the tournament approval form, provided such team is in good standing with its youth state association or country, as necessary.

It shall be the responsibility of each National State Association to certify the eligibility of its competing teams and to provide such teams with a certified copy of the roster, permission to travel, and proof of insurance.

## PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Players must be legally registered through their respective National State Association according to their registration requirements. All teams must have current US Youth Soccer or approved organization player passes or the appropriate National State Association passes to participate.

Passes must be verified, photo attached, and laminated.

## PLAYER'S AGE AND ELIGIBILITY

Under 9 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2017	Up to 12 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 3
Under 10 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2016	Up to 12 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 3
Under 11 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2015	Up to 16 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 3
Under 12 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2014	Up to 16 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 3
Under 13 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2013	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5
Under 14 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2012	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5
Under 15 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2011	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5
Under 16 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2010	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5
Under 17 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2009	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5
Under 19 Boys & Girls Division	Birth Year 2007	Up to 22 on Roster	Guest Player Limit 5

PLAYERS MAY NOT PLAY FOR MORE THAN ONE TEAM IN THE TOURNAMENT.



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## PRE-GAME PROCEDURES

Tournament officials shall conduct all credential checks:

- a. At initial registration
- b. At the field prior to each game

In no event will a player be allowed to participate who has not been certified by the tournament committee. A player who arrives late at the playing field after the pre-game procedure may enter the game once the game's official(s) verify the player is eligible and with the permission of the referee.

Only in the pre-game procedure may a player be challenged by an opposing manager/coach. Challenged player(s) will be noted by the referee on the game report and will be allowed to participate in the game (if said player has been certified as eligible by the tournament committee). A challenged player does not constitute a game protest but may serve as a basis for protest should one be submitted. A late arriving player may be challenged at the time he/she is allowed to participate by the referee.

Each manager/coach or assistant must have a valid coach's pass and be listed on the roster. If a manager or coach is ejected, an assistant may conduct the team. If the assistant is also ejected, or there is no assistant, the game will be forfeited. In no case will a team be allowed to participate without a properly registered coach or assistant.

THERE WILL BE NO COIN TOSS. The away team always has opening kick-off, home team will pick which goal to attack in the first half.

## CONCUSSION POLICY - Pursuant to Florida Statutes (FS 943.0438)

- 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 her/his 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.

## HEADING GUIDELINES

Deliberate heading is not allowed in age groups 12U and younger.

If a 12U 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 occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.



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## TOURNAMENT HOUSING

All teams, except as noted below, are subject to book lodging through the Florida State Invitation (FSI) designated travel provider as a condition to complete at the event.

- a. Teams that are located within a 75 mile driving distance of FSI's FSU Sportsplex are not required to book.
- b. Teams that are located within a 90 mile driving distance of the of FSI's FSU Sportsplex and have a drive time of less than 90 minutes are not required to book.
- c. All teams over 90 miles are expected to book with the designated travel provider as a condition to compete- No Exceptions.
- d. The address used for the determination of the distance/ time will be the address of the FSU Sportsplex.
- e. Google Maps™ or other approved online mapping services will be used to determine driving distance and time.

## LAWS OF THE GAME

All games shall be according to FIFA "Laws of the Game," except as modified below:

### 9/10U - BUILD OUT LINE

When the goalkeeper has the ball, either during play (from the opponent) or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. A quick start by the GK is allowed before the opposing team all retreat behind the build out line. Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punting/drop kicks not allowed). Ball is in play when it leaves the GK's hands, this is when players may cross the build out line & pressure the ball.

The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called.

- Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the build out line.
- Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line.

### LAW 1: FIELD OF PLAY

Players twelve (12) and under must play under the auspices of US Youth Soccer and FYSA according to the rules of Development Player Program.

### LAW 2: THE BALL

9U-12U uses a Size 4; 13U-19U uses a size 5.

### LAW 3: NUMBER OF PLAYERS PER SIDE

Maximum roster sizes: 9U and 10U (playing 7v7): 12 11U and 12U (playing 9v9): 16; 13U and up (playing 11v11): 22.

### Substitutions:

May be made only upon proper notification of the referee through the assistant referee, and with the referee's permission. Substitute may not enter the field of play until the player he/she is replacing has left the field, and after being signaled onto the field by the referee. Substitutions will be allowed at any stoppage by either team, with the referee's permission.



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## LAW 4: PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Player equipment shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Affiliate, FYSA and FIFA rules.

### Additionally:

- a. Screw-in cleats are permitted; however, judgment as to their safety is at the discretion of the referee.
- b. Shin guards must comply with FIFA Law 4:
  1. Shin guards are covered entirely by the stockings.
  2. Shin guards are made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substances).
  3. Shin guards must PROVIDE A REASONABLE DEGREE OF PROTECTION.
  4. Shin guards are required for any FYSA event for the safety of the players.
- c. Orthopedic casts can be worn at any sanctioned FYSA 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. Soft braces can be worn with written approval from a doctor, and judgement as to safety is at the discretion of the referee.
- d. It is the policy of FYSA that no player be allowed to wear ANY jewelry while participating in any FYSA 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. (The taping of any earring shall not be permitted under any circumstances.) If the referee notices a player wearing jewelry while the match is under way at the next stoppage of play, the referee will instruct the player to remove the item. If the referee deems the jewelry to be dangerous to any player, the referee must stop the match to correct the situation.

A player may be removed from the game at any time if the referee determines that the player is using or is attempting to use a brace to injure another player.

### Uniforms:

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. No two players may have identical uniform numbers on the team roster or while both players are playing on the field at the same time.

- a. **HOME TEAM WILL WEAR LIGHT COLORS AND THE AWAY TEAM WILL WEAR DARK.** In the event of similar team colors, the designated home team will be required to change to a color accepted by the referee.
- b. Teams dressed predominantly in colors of those associated with the referee uniforms will be responsible for providing the referee and assistant referees with a jersey that is distinctively different from the uniforms worn by either competing team.
- c. The goalkeeper's uniform colors must distinguish him/her from the other players, the referee and the assistant referee.

## LAW 5: REFEREES

Referees are required to submit a completed, official game report to the site director containing any information relating to any game incidents involving players/coach, spectator misconduct, or injuries.

- a. Referees will not be paid before any required post-game reports have been submitted.
- b. 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 an alternate assistant referee. The game will be played as scheduled and will be deemed official.



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## LAW 6: ASSISTANT REFEREES

Two (2) assistant referees will be assigned in the appropriate age group games. In the event the assigned assistant referees fail to appear, the referee must find suitable assistant referees. The game will be played as scheduled and will be deemed official.

## LAW 7: DURATION OF THE GAME

The duration of the game will be:

Division	Minutes	Division	Minutes
19U	70	13U	70
17U	70	12U	60
16U	70	11U	60
15U	70	10U	50
14U	70	9U	50

All games will consist of two (2) equal halves with one half-time period of five (5) minutes.

Preliminary games will have no overtime periods to settle ties.

## LAW 8 - LAW 17: GAME CONDUCT

### CONTROL OF SIDELINE CONDUCT

Players, reserve players, managers, coaches, and fans are expected to conduct themselves within the letter and spirit of "The Laws of the Game". The tournament director (or designee) 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 about by any other authority. In addition to good manners, these rules will apply to this tournament:

- a. The tournament director (or designee) will designate one sideline to be for the sole use of the players listed on the game roster and two manager/coaches from each team, with one team occupying one side of the midfield and one team the other.
- b. While the game is in progress, the manager/coach(s) and the reserve players must remain on their respective benches and may not roam the sidelines.
- c. The tournament director (or designee) will designate the opposite sideline for the spectators.
- d. Manager(s)/coach(s) will be responsible for the behavior of their fans and the referee will have the authority to warn, and ultimately send off, any coach whose fans behave in an abusive or disruptive manner.



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## TECHNICAL AREA

The technical area relates to matches played in game fields with a designated seated area for team officials, substitutes and substituted players as outlined below:

- The technical area shall only extend 1m (1yd) on either side of the designated seated area and up to a distance of 1m (1yd) from the touchline.
- Markings shall be used to define the area, temporary or Permanent. The number of persons permitted to occupy the technical area is defined by the competition rules.
- The occupants of the technical area:
  - a. Are identified before the start of the match in accordance with the competition rules.
  - b. Must behave in a responsible manner.
  - c. Must remain within its confines except in special circumstances, e.g., a physiotherapist/doctor entering the field of play, with the referee's permission, to assess an injured player.
- Only one person at a time is authorized to convey tactical instructions from the technical area.

## CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

All players and managers/ coaches shall be subject to Florida Youth Soccer Associations Section 502 – Discipline and Sanctions.

- It shall be solely the team's responsibility to determine the status of its players and coaches. 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.
- Per FYSA Rule 504.1, 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."
- The Tournament Committee shall have a Discipline Committee of three (3) members. This committee will review and rule on all reports of unacceptable conduct by players, managers, coaches, referees, spectators, etc. using the FYSA standards as set by Rules Section 502.
- Any player or manager/coach ejected (red carded) will not complete the game in which the ejection occurred. The ejected player or manager/coach will not participate in the next scheduled tournament game regardless of the cause.
- Depending on the severity of the unacceptable conduct, the Discipline Committee may recommend the suspension of up to the duration of the tournament in accordance with FYSA requirements. The committee's recommendations must be available to the affected parties no later than following the next scheduled match.
- At the conclusion of the tournament, passes will be returned to the coach, even if the suspension has not been completed. A complete discipline report will be sent to the FYSA office within 72 hours of the tournament's conclusion for possible further discipline.

## POST-GAME PROCEDURES

As a mutual courtesy, both teams meet at the center circle and congratulate each other for a game well played.

- a. Referees will return player passes to the Site Director along with a completed game report.
- b. The coach/manager of each team will confirm the score with the Site Director and collect passes after each game except for those participants sent off (if any).
- c. The manager/coach of both teams will ensure their respective sideline areas are clean and that all trash is in containers.



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## **DETERMINATION OF WINNERS**

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

**GAME POINTS: 3 points for a Win; 1 point for a Tie; 0 points for a Loss**

### **TIE BREAKERS:**

1. Head to Head Competition
2. Net Goal Differential to a maximum of 6 per game
3. Goals scored to a maximum of 6 per game
4. Goals allowed to a maximum of 6 per game
5. Most shutouts
6. Kicks from the penalty mark per FIFA rules/Coin Toss (To be Determined by Tournament Director)

**15-19U DIVISIONS** will play showcase format with 3 games only. The winner of each division will be determined by points.

**MERCY RULE** If at any point in the second half of play a team is up by eight (8) or more goals the match will end via mercy rule.

**SEMI-FINAL AND CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES** will proceed directly to Penalty Kicks. **NO OVERTIME WILL BE PLAYED.**

## **AWARDS**

Following the completion of each championship game and at the conclusion of group games to determine winners and finalists the teams will present themselves to the game site coordinator for awards.

## **FORFEITS**

A team is allowed a fifteen (15) minute grace period from the scheduled time before awarding the game to the opposing team. A minimum of eligible players (7 for 11v11) must be present, dressed, and ready to play within the grace period, to constitute a "team." The game will be scored as 6-0. If the scheduled time is revised from the printed schedule, coaches/managers will be notified by email, tournament website, phone or in person by a Tournament Official of the new game time.

## **PERFORMANCE BOND**

A performance bond may be required of teams to guarantee participation. The host organization shall return any un-forfeited bonds immediately after the team's final game.

## **PROTEST AND DISPUTES**

No protests will be accepted, decisions by referees may not be appealed. All disputes will be resolved immediately by the Site Director. These decisions will be final.



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## 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 shortened – The Tournament Director may reduce the length of halves due to weather conditions before the restart of a match; once delayed due to weather, all such matches will be considered official
- Be rescheduled (Time and location) to be determined by the Tournament Director.
- Go to “taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark.” (Time and location determined by the Tournament Director).
- If the Tournament Director rules that during the preliminary round “Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark.” Will be done due to inclement weather or field conditions; the following rule will apply:
- Each team will take a maximum of five (5) penalty kicks.
- At the end of five (5) kicks the game will be scored as a 1-0 win for the team that has scored more penalty kicks, or a 0-0 tie if both teams are tied in penalty kicks at the end of five (5) kicks.
- Be canceled- the tournament committee has the right to cancel any match that has no bearing on the scoring and progression of tournament play.

In the event, unusual conditions necessitate the rescheduling, curtailment, or cancellation of games, the tournament committee shall have absolute authority to make the changes in order to best serve the interests by a certain time period. In case of extreme weather (heat/humidity), the referee shall allow brief stoppage of the game to allow players on the field a water break.

## GENERAL

The tournament committee, FYSA and/or the host affiliate will not be responsible for any expense incurred by any team due to the cancellation in part or whole of this tournament.

- a. The tournament committee's interpretation on the foregoing rules and regulations shall be final.
- b. The tournament committee reserves the right to decide all tournament matters.
- c. After a team has been accepted into the competition, **NO REFUND WILL BE GIVEN** should the team decide to withdraw from the event. Tournament entry fee returns/refunds will be granted, as follows:
  - within five (5) days after notification that the team is not accepted by their application;
  - within five (5) days upon cancellation of the tournament;
  - within ten (10) days of withdrawal request of the application by a team prior to acceptance of that application by the tournament
  - If not, enough teams are realized within a specific age bracket, the tournament director shall notify the participants as soon as possible and the participants shall be given the option to play up or to receive a full refund.
- d. The tournament committee has the responsibility to uphold any previous suspension imposed by FYSA/US Youth Soccer.
- e. The tournament committee agrees to have a copy of the tournament rules at all game sites.