



2025–2026 Girls Academy Framework Summary

Risk Management – Key Points

Commitment to Safety

- GA is committed to a safe environment for all participants — abuse of any kind is prohibited (physical, sexual, emotional, verbal).
- Zero tolerance for discriminatory, threatening, or demeaning behavior.
- All members are responsible for reporting questionable conduct.
- GA will act quickly on all allegations, following established procedures.

Conduct & Supervision

- Promote respect, sportsmanship, and tolerance at all times.
- Avoid one-on-one situations with youth participants (unless own child).
- Recommended **1:9 adult-to-youth ratio**; minimum two adults present for all activities.
- Overnight travel: pair athletes with same-gender/similar age; chaperones in nearby separate rooms.

Compliance Requirements

- Coaches & administrators: must complete US Soccer Safe Soccer **Phases 1–3**.
- Players turning 18: must complete **Phase 1**.
- Failure to comply or falsifying information may result in suspension or disqualification.

Facility & Equipment Safety

- **Home club** responsible for inspecting and securing fields/goals before play.
- Goals must be anchored, structurally sound, nets secure, no sharp edges.
- Visiting clubs must report safety concerns immediately.
- Referee has final authority on field, goal, and equipment safety.

Liability

- Clubs and players assume all risks unless covered by league sanctioning body insurance.
- All participants must sign a **liability waiver** at registration.

Weather: Clubs must follow GA weather delay/cancellation protocols to ensure participant safety. [Weather-Related-Guidelines-and-Expectations.pdf](#)

League Framework

1. Game Length



- **U13, U14, U15:** Two (2) 40-minute halves with a 10-minute halftime.
 - **U16, U17, U19:** Two (2) 45-minute halves with a 10-minute halftime.
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2. International Transfer Certificates (ITCs)

- ITCs are required for foreign players due to U.S. Soccer membership.
 - Clubs must complete the clearance process outlined in **U.S. Soccer Federation Bylaws and Policies, Section VI.B.1.**
 - The club must submit to the league-approved ITC before the player is eligible to compete.
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3. Safe Soccer Requirements

- **Players turning 18** during the 2025–2026 season must complete **Phase 1.**
 - **Coaches and Managers** must complete **Phases 1, 2, and 3.**
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4. Player Designations

Primary (P) Players

- Minimum of **14 Primary (P)** players must be submitted by the initial roster deadline (**August 1**).

Club Player Pass (CP)

- Any player registered in your club for another GA or Aspire team who is age-eligible.
- May only play **one (1) game per fixture.**
- Must be **registered with Girls Academy.**
- To appear in your CP pool, the player must be a Primary (P) player on an existing GA or Aspire roster within your club.
- CP players are **automatically approved** but still subject to roster rules (age, size).
- CP players may be removed and exchanged for others but still count toward roster limits.



- **No write-ins allowed** (jersey numbers may be written in if needed, but not player names).
- **Aspire:** Maximum of **2 GA CP players** per game/event; fixture-tied and one game per day.
- **GA:** Unlimited Aspire CP players per game/event; fixture-tied and one game per day.

Identification (ID) Players

- Non-GA or Aspire players; must be approved by the Senior Director of Member Services before being added.
- U13–U17: Maximum **3 ID players**.
- U19: Maximum **5 ID players**.
- Once max is reached, clubs cannot remove/release additional ID players.
- **No training required** for ID players.
- Violation penalty: \$500 fine, match forfeiture, and loss of playoff eligibility.
- ID players may not CP to other teams; they are tied to their registered age group.

Guest (G) Players

- **U15–U17:** Allowed for summer showcase events only with prior approval; maximum 2 per event.
- **U19:** Allowed for all showcases (except Champions Cup & Summer Playoffs) with prior approval; maximum 2 per event.

Trapped Player Rules

- **U19 Trapped Player:** 11th grader age-eligible for U19; maximum 3 eligible for U17 GA National Events; ineligible for Champions Cup & GA Summer Playoffs.
- **U15 Trapped Player:** 8th grader age-eligible for U15; eligible to participate in one (1) U14 GA Regional Event; maximum 3 trapped players per event.

5. Roster Size

- **U13–U17:** Maximum 30 on the roster at one time; 18 designated on game day.



- **U19:** Maximum 40 on the roster at one time; 18 designated on game day.
- Once a player is added to a GA team roster, they count toward the max even if released (except CP players).

Game Day Roster

- U13–U19: Only 18 players eligible to participate; must be on match card.
- **No write-ins allowed.**
- Bench/technical area: Players + maximum 4 registered club staff (not including ATC).

6. Player Participation Limits

- Any GA-registered player may play on **only one (1) GA or Aspire team per day.**
- Players may participate in **only one (1) GA/Aspire competition or scheduled match per day.**

Fixture Tie Rules

- Once a player plays in a scheduled club fixture, they cannot play in a rescheduled fixture in another age group.
- A “fixture” includes all games between two clubs across U13–U19 when they play each other.
- If split across multiple days (intentionally or rescheduled), it is still considered **one fixture.**



Sporting & Competition Standards



1. Coach Licensing Requirements

To ensure a high standard of coaching and player development, all coaches and directors in Girls Academy and Aspire programs must meet the following:

Girls Academy Clubs

- **Directors:** Minimum **USSF B License** or equivalent.
 - Must have a documented plan to attain **USSF A-Youth License** or equivalent
- **Head & Assistant Coaches:** Minimum **USSF C License** or equivalent.
 - Must have a documented plan to attain **USSF B License** or equivalent

Aspire Clubs

- **Directors:** Minimum **USSF C License** or equivalent.
 - Must have a documented plan to attain **USSF B License** or equivalent
 - **Coaches:** Minimum **USSF D License** or equivalent.
 - Must have a documented plan to attain **USSF C License** or equivalent
 - **Notes:**
 - Clubs must have a documented plan to attain the necessary license for staff within 18 months of appointment or by the start of the 2027 season, whichever is sooner.
 - Clubs must track and support coaching development in alignment with these standards.
 - Newly hired or international coaches must provide documentation of equivalency or proof of enrollment in the USSF pathway.
 - Failure to meet licensing standards may impact club standing or eligibility for future GA programming.
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2. Substitutions



- **GA Substitution Sheet** must be used for all matches and submitted with the match card.
 - **Home team** provides the sheet to match officials; substitutions are tracked by match officials only.
 - **Maximum:** Five (5) substitution moments per game, with no more than three (3) per half.
 - **Re-entry** permitted in the second half only; if a re-entered player is subbed off again, they may not re-enter.
 - **Halftime** does not count as a substitution moment.
 - Substitutions allowed at any stoppage.
 - **Substitution Violations:** If a team exceeds the allowed number of substitutions during a match, regardless of intent, the match may be subject to disciplinary review.
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3. Match Day Procedures

Facility Set-Up

- **Two fields should be available for Girls Academy and Aspire fixtures.**
- Home team is responsible for venue set-up, including: Proper field markings and dimensions, goals, nets, and corner flags, benches and team areas, tents (as needed), adequate water for teams and officials
- **Athletic Trainer:** An athletic trainer must be provided for all matches, **at least 60 minutes before the first match and continuing until the final match's end.** If there is not a trainer present, it must be reported to the league office immediately. Failure to provide an ATC will result in a league fine and formal reprimand by the national league office.

Scheduling on Match Day

- All age groups are required to play at the same facility on the same day, unless both clubs agree otherwise and it is approved by the Director of League Competitions.
- Game schedules must allow at least 30 minutes of warm-up time between each kickoff.



- Less than 30 minutes is permitted if there is adequate warm-up space in an adjacent area.

Match Cards

- Both home and away teams must provide the standard (non-photo) match card for each match.
- Match cards must list all rostered players, coaches, and managers.
- Players not participating must be crossed off.
- Home team must enter the **score, goal-scorers, cards**, and upload the match card in GotSport within 24 hours.

Post-Game Reporting

- Both clubs must complete the Post-Game Match Day Report within 48 hours of the fixture.
 - Reports include: relevant match feedback or incidents, confirmation that minimum standards were met, any concerns related to officiating, field setup, or protocol compliance

Filming of Matches – Veo League Exchange

- All member clubs are responsible for filming **all home matches** in all age groups (**U13–U19**).
- All filmed matches must be **uploaded into the league exchange provider (Veo)** within **48 hours** of the last match of the weekend fixtures.
- Fines will apply for matches not uploaded within the required timeframe.

Resources *(available in the Director Portals on the GA website under “Veo”)*

- **Resource Page** – General guidelines and best practices.
- **Submitting a Support Ticket Request** – Instructions for opening a support ticket with Veo.
- **Video: League Exchange Demo** – Step-by-step demonstration of how to use the League Exchange platform.
- **Adding Members to the League Exchange** – Guide for granting access to staff or players.



Referee Fees

- **Girls Academy (GA)**

Age Group Center AR1 AR2 4th Official*

U13–U15 \$90 \$60 \$60 \$45

U16–U19 \$100 \$70 \$70 \$45

- **Aspire League**

Age Group Center AR1 AR2 4th Official*

U13–U15 \$85 \$55 \$55 \$45

U16–U19 \$95 \$65 \$65 \$45

*4th Officials are not required for GA or Aspire league matches.

4. Scheduling

- No matches shall be scheduled prior to **9:00 AM** unless both clubs agree in writing.
- All matches must be scheduled to end at least **30 minutes before sunset** unless lights are provided and the visiting club agrees to a later start time in writing.
- Matches must be scheduled with **professionalism and goodwill**—no scheduling that creates a competitive advantage or disadvantage.
- All matches played on the same day are expected to be at the **same facility** unless the visiting club agrees to use multiple facilities in writing.
- If multiple facilities are used, all must meet **GA game day standards**.
- Fixture times must be agreed upon by both clubs to avoid coaching conflicts.

Rescheduling Policy & Limitations

Once the league schedule is finalized and published, games are expected to be played as scheduled to protect season integrity and minimize disruption to players, families, referees, and facilities.



Reschedule requests will not be approved for:

- Player or coach conflicts (including tournaments, other events, or club travel)
- Non-GA competition or training conflicts
- Preferences for alternate venues or times

Acceptable reasons for reschedule/postponement include:

- Unsafe field or weather conditions
- Documented facility closures
- Major travel disruptions (e.g., flight cancellations)
- League-approved exceptional circumstances

Limitations on Reschedule Requests:

- One (1) discretionary reschedule request per season per team, subject to league approval.
- Requests must be submitted at least **14 days** before the scheduled match (unless weather/emergency-related).
- Changes to already confirmed reschedules require league approval.
- Repeated requests or last-minute changes may result in fines or loss of rescheduling privileges.

Authority:

- Final decision-making authority rests with the league, in consultation with the Competitions Committee, especially for issues impacting competitive balance, travel efficiency, or conflicts with playoffs/national events.

5. Competitions & Events

Fall 2025 GA & Aspire Events

- Registration emails sent yesterday to all member clubs for fall 2025 events.



- Clubs are responsible for completing event registration by the deadlines provided in the email.
- Event details, schedules, and participation requirements are outlined in the registration materials.
- **See the GA website for the most up-to-date information, including age group dates of play.**

Champions Cup 2026-2027 Qualification

- Expanded to **24 teams** per age group (previously 20).
- Qualification based on 2025-2026 regular season performance and competition criteria.
- Each conference's # of Champions Cup allocations are in the framework documents.

Playoffs 2025-2026

- Each conference's # of playoff allocations are in the framework documents.
- **U13:** Expanded to **20 teams** (previously 16).
 - Final Four to be played at GA Finals in July.
- **U14–U17:** Expanded to **36 teams** (previously 32).
 - Additional knockout **Round of 16** added to June playoffs for teams that qualify.
- **U19:** No change to format or number of teams. No third-place game at Summer Showcase & Finals.

GA National Event Attendance Expectations

- **U13** – 1 Regional Event, Summer Playoffs, *no* Summer Showcase.
- **U14** – 1 Regional Event, Summer Playoffs, *no* Summer Showcase.
- **U15** – 1 National Event, plus Summer Playoffs **or** Summer Showcase.
- **U16** – 1 National Event, plus Summer Playoffs **or** Summer Showcase.
- **U17** – 1 National Event, plus Summer Playoffs **or** Summer Showcase.
- **U19** – 1 National Event, Summer Playoffs, *no* Summer Showcase.

Aspire Attendance Expectations



- All Aspire teams are required to attend **1 Event**.
 - Summer Playoffs attendance is **only if qualified**.
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6. Recruiting Guidelines

- **Non-GA Players** – Member clubs may recruit non-GA players for participation on GA teams at any time.
 - **Current GA Players** – Member clubs may not recruit current GA players except during market tryout timelines; direct outreach is prohibited outside of these windows.
 - **Shared Markets** – Clubs are expected to communicate tryout timelines, operate with integrity and professionalism, and avoid conflicts or confusion for families.
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7. Disciplinary Process & Standards of Behavior

- All disciplinary cases follow the same process — **initial review by league staff, referral to the Disciplinary Committee**, and, when appropriate, an **external review by qualified experts**.
- The **safety of participants** and the league's core values of **respect, sportsmanship, and integrity** must remain central to every match experience; incidents are also opportunities to reaffirm our collective commitment to these standards.
- The league will be **tracking yellow and red card violations more intentionally** throughout the season to promote accountability and consistent enforcement.



Questions & Answers

1. Age Group Structure & Player Eligibility

- Will the age group change be in effect for the 2026–27 season? **YES**
 - Do you know if GA/GA Aspire are changing to school year next year or staying with birth year? **The GA will be changing, specifics TBA**
 - Can players within the club guest with Aspire teams if they are primarily part of the local league (SoCal, NPL, etc.)? **We do not allow guest; you may use ID player.**
 - Clarifying the geography question – if they are primary to our club but live in a different state, is that an issue? **They must meet the primary player guidelines.**
 - Are there geographic limitations on primary players? Can they be from a nearby state other than your club's home state? **If they meet the training requirements, yes.**
 - Can a GA-A player from a club that doesn't have a GA team guest play or ID with another club that has top GA teams? **NO**
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- What about DPL players for player movement? **They must be registered as primary if they are internally in your club to participate.**
 - Are U15 trap players eligible to play in U14 league matches during the high school season when the U15 team is not playing? Or only regional events? **One regional event only, max 3 per event.**

2. Coaching & Staff Requirements

- We have more than one head coach in the process of getting their license. Do we simply upload a document that outlines when they will get it? **Submit licensure plan in gotSPORT and to sporting director.**
- Does an ATC need the coaching certifications, or just the head coach? **Coaches only**
- For Aspire Academy, do assistant coaches need a D license? **They need to be on track to complete.**



- What happens if an ATC doesn't complete the 3 phases? **They are not allowed in technical area**
- For U18 players needing to complete Safe Soccer Phase 1, what should be done if their account is not syncing with GotSport? **Email league office**

3. Equipment & Game Day Standards

- Tents for match days – do they need to have GA logos? Is there a specific provider? **You can use your club logo tents for league matches.**

4. Scheduling & Fixtures

- Can we use one field and schedule U13 & U14 games back-to-back this fall? **YES**
- Does the entire season game schedule need to be completed by August 19? **YES**
- If we need to change a fixture, what is the process? **Submit Game Change request in gotsport**

5. Events & Competitions

- For the National event in North Carolina, is that only U15–U19 or will all age groups have the opportunity? **GA event is only U15-U19, Aspire event is U12-U19**
- Can you confirm if the required GA Aspire regional event is at a different time/location than the GA regional event? **YES**
- Aspire Showcase – Super Group:
 - How will teams be selected? **By committee**
 - What timeline will teams/clubs be notified after the registration deadline if they're accepted? **As soon as possible**
- Aspire playoffs: **INFORMATION will be sent out shortly to all clubs.**
 - Are they the same format as GA top tier playoffs?



- Is the qualification process the same?
 - How will Aspire playoffs work?
- To confirm: Teams register themselves for events and clubs do not bulk upload and receive one invoice? **Correct, a club admin can register all the teams, but they must be registered individually.**
- “TTS” system – what is it and how is it used for events? **Team Travel Source is official hotel partner of the Girls Academy. An email will be sent with links to reserve hotels as they open.**

6. Policies & Documents

- Is the COI (Certificate of Insurance) required in addition to our own insurance?
- What do we do if our club doesn't show up on the COI portal? **Email Tina at ops@girlsacademyleague.com**
- Are substitution rules and the sub sheet applicable to Aspire as well as GA? **Yes**
- Does Aspire have its own branded sub sheet, or is it the same as GA? **Same sheet but will be branded with Aspire**
- Where are we submitting approved ITCs? **To respective registrar for the league, GA or Aspire**