HERNDON YOUTH SOCCER
ALL-STAR CUP TOURNAMENT

Official Tournament Rules

FALL 2026

Registration Deadline	October 23, 2026
Tournament Dates	November 21st – November 22nd 2026
Tournament Director	Joseph Farrington
Contact	AllStarCoordinator@herndonyouthsoccer.org
Rules Version	Publication-ready consolidated edition

These rules are intended for participating clubs, coaches, team officials, players, parents, spectators, referees, and tournament volunteers.

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1. Tournament Authority

The Tournament Director and Tournament Committee have final authority over tournament operations, interpretation of these rules, scheduling adjustments, weather-related decisions, disciplinary matters, and issues not expressly addressed in this document. Their decisions are final, subject to any controlling requirements of the applicable sanctioning organizations.

Tournament officials may modify schedules, age-group structures, game lengths, or competition formats as necessary to ensure the orderly completion of the Tournament.

2. Laws of the Game

Matches will be played under the IFAB Laws of the Game in effect for the 2026/27 season, except as modified by these Tournament Rules and applicable youth-soccer policies. If a conflict exists, these published competition rules govern to the extent permitted by the sanctioning authority.

Additional modifications for U8, the U9-U10 build-out line, and heading restrictions for U11 and younger appear in Sections 16 through 18.

3. Team Registration and Eligibility

Each team must be registered with its sponsoring club, and the sponsoring club must be affiliated with the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA). The Tournament is intended for recreational all-star teams composed exclusively of recreationally rostered players.

3.1 Player Participation Requirements

- Players must have actively participated on a recreational team during the Fall 2026 season.
- Players must have participated in at least three (3) games with that team during the Fall 2026 season.
- Players must appear on the official Tournament roster for the team on which they will compete.

3.2 Maximum Roster Sizes

Age Group	Maximum Team Size
U8	8
U9-U10	14
U11-U12	16
U13-U19	18

3.3 Roster Restrictions

- Guest players, travel-team players, and carded players are not permitted.
- Teams may not be formed using players from multiple clubs. For example, a combined roster of HYS and SYC players is not permitted.
- A player must meet the age requirements of the Tournament age group in which they are to compete.
- A player may compete only for the team on whose Tournament roster the player is registered.
- A player may not participate for more than one team during the Tournament.

3.4 Registration Documents and Deadline

Each team must submit an official roster listing every player, date of birth, uniform number, and team official. Each team must also maintain an approved medical release for every player, signed by a parent or legal guardian.

Registration may be completed electronically or by paper submission. Teams must pre-register by October 23, 2026, to be considered for the Fall 2026 All-Star Cup.

Team rosters will be checked during online registration.

Medical release forms will not be collected, but each coach is required to submit a check-in form on the first day at the Tournament, with the Site Coordinators at their site, that attests that they have the forms physically or electronically for each player, should they be needed in the event of an emergency.

Copies must be provided to the Tournament Committee or Site Coordinators, as requested, and a team official must retain the medical releases throughout the event.

If online pre-registration is unavailable, contact Tournament Director Joseph Farrington at AllStarCoordinator@herndonyouthsoccer.org.

4. Player Eligibility and Age Divisions

The Tournament offers the age divisions listed below. Eligibility is based on the birth-date limit for the division in which the team is entered and any Tournament Committee-approved combination of divisions.

Division	Born
U8	August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2019
U9	August 1, 2017 – July 31, 2018
U10	August 1, 2016 – July 31, 2017
U11	August 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016
U12	August 1, 2014 – July 31, 2015
U13	August 1, 2013 – July 31, 2014
U14	August 1, 2012 – July 31, 2013
U16	August 1, 2010 – July 31, 2012
U19	August 1, 2007 – July 31, 2010

The Tournament Committee may combine age groups or divisions when necessary. Any combination will be communicated before competition begins.

5. Registration Fee Refunds and Team Withdrawal Policy

The following consolidated policy governs both withdrawals and tournament-related cancellations:

- A team that withdraws before the application deadline will receive a full refund.
- After a team has been accepted, the registration fee is non-refundable unless a replacement team is found or the Tournament Committee approves a partial refund.

- No refund will be issued to a team that withdraws after schedules have been posted, unless the Tournament Committee determines that exceptional circumstances warrant a partial refund.
- If some or all games are cancelled because of weather, field conditions, or circumstances beyond Tournament control, the Tournament Committee will determine whether any refund is available after unrecoverable event expenses are considered.
- HYS, the Tournament Committee, and Tournament sponsors are not responsible for travel, lodging, or other expenses incurred by participating teams because of cancellation, delay, or modification of the event.

6. Player Equipment

Players and teams must comply with the following equipment requirements:

- Metal cleats and metal-tipped cleats are prohibited.
- Shin guards are required.
- Jewelry is prohibited.
- Except for the goalkeeper, each player must wear a unique number on the jersey. A temporary number may be created with tape or permanent marker, if necessary.
- The goalkeeper jersey must be readily distinguishable from the jerseys of all other players and match officials.

6.1 Uniform Color Conflicts

If team jersey colors are similar or identical, the home team must change jerseys. The visiting team must assist in resolving the conflict. The referee will determine whether a change is required.

If a team changes jerseys because of a color conflict, replacement jerseys do not have to carry numbers. However, the coach must identify each player's original uniform number if requested by the referee.

6.2 Protective Casts

A player wearing a protective cast may participate only if all of the following conditions are met:

- The cast is wrapped in foam or another protective material sufficient to protect all participants.
- The player does not use the cast to gain an advantage or in a manner that endangers any participant.
- The referee approves the cast before play. Approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

Referees will inspect equipment before each match. Equipment may not be changed after inspection without referee permission. The referee has final authority regarding equipment safety and acceptance for play.

7. Inclement Weather and Match Termination

Every reasonable effort will be made to play all scheduled matches. Before a match begins, the Tournament Director may cancel, delay, shorten, relocate, or otherwise modify a match because of weather, field conditions, or other safety concerns. HYS must comply with Fairfax County field-use and closure policies.

- Teams are responsible for checking the Tournament website or with the Site Coordinators for field-status updates.
- Unless the website or Site Coordinators states that fields are closed or a match is otherwise changed, teams must report to the scheduled site and be ready to play on time.
- Failure to appear as scheduled will result in a forfeit.

If a match is terminated after at least one-half of the scheduled playing time has been completed, the match will be considered official and the score at termination will stand. If less than one-half has been completed, the Tournament Director will determine the disposition of the match.

8. Referees and Match Officials

Certified referees will be assigned to all matches by the Tournament's referee assignor.

Age Group	Standard Referee System
U8-U12	One referee
U13-U19	Three-person crew

If requested by the referee or Tournament staff, each team must provide an assistant referee or club linesperson. If an assigned referee does not arrive, the match will proceed with volunteer officials selected by the Site Coordinator or another Tournament official until the assigned referee arrives. The result will be official, and a protest based solely on the use of a volunteer official will not be accepted.

Interference with or abuse of match officials will not be tolerated. Any player, coach, parent, spectator, or person responsible for an accompanying animal may be removed from the Tournament site if conduct interferes with a referee's duties.

9. Team Field Position and Spectator Areas

The home team is the team listed first on the official schedule. The home team has first choice of the field side occupied by its coaches, players, and spectators. The visiting team will occupy the opposite side unless directed otherwise by a referee or Tournament official.

At facilities where the layout requires teams and players on one side and spectators on the other, Tournament officials will direct placement.

- Coaches and substitutes must remain at least one (1) meter from the touchline and within the designated technical or bench area.
- Parents and other spectators must remain at least three (3) meters from the touchline.
- For U9-U12 matches, no person may stand closer to the goal line than the top of the 14-yard box.
- For U13-U19 matches, no person may stand closer to the goal line than the top of the 18-yard box.
- No person may stand behind the goal or between the touchlines beyond the goal line, and coaching from behind the goal line is prohibited.

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and team-associated spectators and for compliance with sideline instructions.

10. Tournament Format

The All-Star Cup uses a World Cup-style format consisting of a Qualification Round and a Championship Round.

10.1 Qualification Round

- U9-U19 teams will play four (4) mini-games on Saturday.
- At the conclusion of Qualification Round play, all teams in an age group will be seeded using match points, bonus points, and tiebreakers.
- Every U9-U19 team advances to a Championship Round bracket.

10.2 Championship Round

- The Championship Round is a single-elimination competition using full-length matches.
- Each U9-U19 team will play at least one Championship Round match on Sunday.
- Teams may be placed into multiple brackets of similarly ranked teams when an age group has a large number of entrants.
- Each bracket conducts its own single-elimination competition, and each bracket has its own Champion and Finalist.

10.3 U8 Format

U8 teams do not participate in the Championship Round. Each U8 team will play seven (7) Qualification Round mini-games, with three (3) games on one day and four (4) on the other day.

11. Start of Play and Number of Players

Teams must be ready to begin at the scheduled start time. The home team will provide the game ball. A team that is not on the field and ready within five (5) minutes after the scheduled start time will forfeit the match.

11.1 Minimum Number of Players to Start

Age Group	Minimum Players
U8	3
U9-U10	6
U11-U12	7
U13-U19	9

A team is not required to reduce its number of field players to match an opponent that is playing with fewer players.

11.2 Standard Playing Format

Age Group	Format
U8	4v4, no goalkeeper
U9-U10	7v7, including goalkeeper
U11-U12	9v9, including goalkeeper
U13-U19	11v11, including goalkeeper

To maintain the schedule, the referee will assign the ends where the home and visiting teams begin each match. Championship Round finals will use a standard coin toss.

12. Roster Checks, Ineligible Players, and Illegal Players

12.1 Qualification Round

Due to time constraints, Qualification matches will not support roster checks.

12.2 Championship Round

Championship Round games will have roster checks performed by the referees before the game starts. Please be at the field, ready to go through the roster check, when the referees are ready. Game time will not be extended should roster checks longer than expected. In those instances, the extra time to perform roster checks will reduce the full time of the game.

12.3 Ineligible Players

Players who are unable to give correct information provided on the roster during a roster check will not be allowed to participate in the game.

Players whose jersey does not match the Tournament roster will not be allowed to participate in the game until they can produce their jersey with the number that matches the roster.

12.4 Illegal Players

Each player must have a unique jersey number that correlates to the jersey number provided on the officially submitted tournament roster.

Illegal players are as follows:

- Unrostered or Guest Player - Player on the field of play who is not on the official tournament roster,
- Travel Player - Player on a roster who is also determined to be rostered on a travel team,
- Suspended Player - Player who has been suspended from the game/tournament, but is or is attempting to participate in the game,
- Unregistered Jersey Number - Players who are placed on the field of play with jersey numbers that do not match the official tournament roster,
- Duplicate Jersey Number - Players with the same jersey number on the field at the same time, and
- Sharing Jersey Number - Players with the same jersey number on the field at different times.

Each player needs a unique jersey number that matches the roster. This can be achieved by using tape/permanent marker, so there should be no reason for number sharing or duplication.

Players who are deemed illegal will be considered to have received a Red Card. They will be disqualified from participating in the Tournament moving forward. The team will be forced to play down a player for each infraction encountered during the game the illegal player infraction is discovered.

Also, the Coach will be considered to have received a Red Card and be removed from the current game and, if their team moves forward, the subsequent game.

13. Length of Games and Match Clock

13.1 Qualification Round

- All age groups: two (2) 12-minute halves.
- Halftime: one (1) minute, during which teams change ends.

13.2 Championship Round

Age Group	Match Length	Halftime
U9-U12	Two 25-minute halves	5 minutes
U13-U19	Two 30-minute halves	5 minutes

Qualification Round and Championship Round matches use a running clock. The clock will stop only when professional medical personnel must assist an injured player from the field of play. U8 teams do not participate in the Championship Round.

14. Ball Sizes

Age Group	Ball Size
U8	Size 3

Age Group	Ball Size
U9-U12	Size 4
U13-U19	Size 5

15. Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions are permitted with the referee's approval at the following times:

- On a throw-in by the team in possession. If that team substitutes, the opposing team may also substitute.
- On a goal kick for either team.
- After either team scores a goal.
- At the beginning of the second half.
- For an injury substitution. The opposing team may also make a one-for-one substitution.
- After a player receives a caution. The cautioned player may be substituted. If the cautioned player is substituted, the opposing team may also substitute a player if they wish.

16. Yellow Cards, Red Cards, and Ejections

A player or coach who receives two yellow cards in the same match, or one red card, must immediately leave the field area and may not continue participating in that match. The player or coach is also suspended from the next Tournament match.

Serious misconduct will be reported to the Tournament Director and may result in additional discipline, including suspension for the remainder of the Tournament and referral to the applicable club or governing association.

17. U8 Competition Rules

- Matches are played 4v4 with no goalkeeper.
- There is no offside offense.
- All free kicks are indirect, and opponents must remain at least four (4) yards from the ball.
- Penalty kicks are not awarded.
- Corner kicks are taken from the general vicinity of the corner.
- Goal kicks may be taken anywhere within the goal area. Opponents must remain at least four (4) yards from the ball and outside the goal area until the ball is put into play.

18. Build-Out Line Policy for U9 and U10

The build-out line is intended to promote playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting.

- When the goalkeeper has the ball during play from an opponent, or when the goalkeeper's team is taking a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat behind the build-out line until the ball is put into play.
- After the opposing team has retreated, the goalkeeper may pass, throw, or roll the ball into play. Punting is prohibited.
- After the ball is put into play, the opposing team may cross the build-out line and play continues normally.

If the goalkeeper punts the ball, the opposing team will receive an indirect free kick from the location of the offense. If the offense occurs inside the goal area, the kick will be taken on the goal-area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest the offense.

18.1 Offside and the Build-Out Line

The build-out line also establishes where offside offenses may be called. A player may not be penalized for offside between the halfway line and the build-out line. A player may be penalized for offside between the build-out line and the goal line.

19. Heading Policy for U11 and Younger

Whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play will be stopped. The restart depends on whether the contact was deliberate or inadvertent:

- Deliberate heading: indirect free kick to the opposing team.
- Deliberate heading inside the goal area: indirect free kick on the goal-area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest the infringement.
- Inadvertent contact: dropped ball.

20. Qualification Round Scoring and Seeding

20.1 Match Points

Result	Points
Regulation win	3
Regulation tie	1 per team
Regulation loss	0

20.2 Bonus Points

- One (1) bonus point for each shutout, including a 0-0 tie.
- Up to three (3) bonus points for goal differential, calculated as goals scored minus goals allowed.

20.3 Tiebreakers

If two or more teams remain tied after match points and bonus points are applied, the following tiebreakers will be used in order:

1. Head-to-head result
2. Fewest goals allowed
3. Most wins
4. Most goals scored
5. Penalty kicks conducted under the applicable Laws of the Game and Tournament procedures

For a three-team tie, once a tiebreaker step separates one or more teams, the process continues to the next step for the remaining tied teams and does not revert to an earlier step.

20.4 Forfeits

A Qualification Round forfeit will be recorded as a 1-0 win for the opposing team.

A Championship Round match forfeited by either team shall result in advancement of the opposing team.

20.5 Championship Bracket Placement

At the conclusion of Qualification Round play, all teams will be ranked by accumulated match points, then bonus points, then the published tiebreakers. When an age group includes many teams, the Tournament may create multiple Championship brackets. For example, in a 16-team age group, teams ranked 1-8 may enter one bracket and teams ranked 9-16 another, with each bracket conducting its own single-elimination competition.

Seedings will be posted on the Tournament website by 9:00 p.m. Saturday. Once posted, seedings are final.

21. Championship Round and Penalty Shoot-Out

All U9-U19 teams advance to the Championship Round. The Championship Round determines the Champion and Finalist for each age group or age group bracket.

A Championship Round match tied at the end of regulation will proceed directly to a penalty shoot-out. Only players who were on the field at the end of regulation are eligible to participate, subject to referee administration under the applicable Laws of the Game.

21.1 Penalty Shoot-Out Procedure

- Team captains participate in a coin toss to determine which team kicks first.
- The referee selects the goal to be used.
- Each coach selects five eligible players for the initial round of alternating kicks.
- The team scoring more goals wins. Kicks end early if one team cannot equal the other team's total with the remaining kicks.
- If the score remains tied after the initial round, eligible players who have not yet kicked will take alternating kicks until one team scores and the other does not after an equal number of kicks.

22. Score Reporting

Game cards are the official record of Tournament match results and disciplinary actions.

- The winning team representative must have the referee complete and sign the game card, verify the score, record all yellow and red cards, and return the card to the Site Coordinator's table.
- For a tied match, both teams are responsible for ensuring that the game card is returned.
- The completed game card must be returned within one (1) hour after the match ends. Failure to return the card within that period may result in the responsible team being recorded as having forfeited.
- When a game card is returned, the team representative will receive the next game card as applicable.

23. Tournament Protests

No protests regarding referee judgment decisions will be accepted. Referee decisions regarding the game are final.

Questions regarding player eligibility, roster compliance, or tournament administration must be brought immediately to the Site Coordinator who may engage the Tournament Director.

Site Coordinator and Tournament Director decisions are final.

24. Awards

Players on the Champion and Finalist teams in each Championship Bracket shall receive awards.

Every U8 player will receive a participation award.

25. East Region Policy Regarding Application to Host a Tournament

East Region has established the following policy concerning permission to travel when attending US Youth Soccer sanctioned tournaments in the Eastern Region. The purpose of this policy is to make it as simple as possible for the US Youth Soccer East Region teams to travel to Tournaments within the East Region.

The policy states that any US Youth Soccer State Association team within the East Region that is accepted into a tournament in the East Region do not need Permission to Travel papers. Permission to Travel is not required in friendly games within the East Region.

Teams are responsible for confirming and satisfying all permission-to-travel, roster, player-pass, medical-release, and credential requirements imposed by their state association, VYSA, US Youth Soccer, or another applicable sanctioning body. Participation in a tournament located within the US Youth Soccer East Region does not relieve a team of any requirement imposed by its own state association.

24.1 National State Associations in East Region

- Connecticut Junior Soccer Association
- Delaware Youth Soccer Association
- Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association

- Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association
- Soccer Maine
- Maryland State Youth Soccer Association
- Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association
- New Hampshire Soccer Association
- New Jersey Youth Soccer Association
- New York State West Youth Soccer Association
- Pennsylvania West State Soccer Association
- Soccer Rhode Island
- Vermont Soccer Association
- Virginia Youth Soccer Association
- West Virginia Soccer Association

26. Final Administrative Provisions

Participation in the Tournament constitutes acceptance of these rules. The Tournament Director may issue administrative instructions that are consistent with these rules and necessary for safe, orderly competition. Any matter not specifically addressed will be decided by the Tournament Director or Tournament Committee under Section 1.

26.1 Publication and Distribution

These rules should be distributed with tournament invitations and made available to all accepted teams before the event. Coaches and team officials are responsible for communicating applicable requirements to players and spectators.