

2026 Independence Cup Summary of Rules

Tournament Check-In

All teams are required to check-in at the Tournament Headquarters with their printed team roster and player cards at *least one hour* prior to their first game of the tournament. Rosters can be modified by hand at the tournament by tournament staff, if necessary. Valid player passes are required. There is no limit on the number of guest players. Teams may register a maximum of 18 players for the U9-U12 age groups with a maximum of 18 players suited up per game; A team may use an UNLIMITED amount of “LOAN” or “GUEST” players, but any team utilizing loan or guest players is still limited to the stated maximum roster size of 18. U13-U19 teams may register 26 players, with a maximum of 18 suited per match

Game Check-In

All teams are required to check-in at the Field Marshall table at least 30 minutes prior to each game. At this time, both the player and a valid player pass must be presented to the Field Marshall.

Duel Rostering

A player is permitted to play for only one team during the tournament. If a team uses a player who has played on another team during the tournament, the game will be ruled a forfeit. (Exceptions may permitted with prior approval of the tournament staff.)

Substitutions: On any throw-in or stoppage of play (with referee approval)

Tournament Competition

Bracket Play

- U9 – U10 (7 v 7) 20:00 Minute Halves, 5 Minute Half-Time, Ties Stand (No OT or PK’s)
- U11 – U12 (9 v 9) 25:00 Minute Halves, 5 Minute Half-Time, Ties Stand (No OT or PK’s)
- U13 – U19 (11 v 11) 30:00 Minute Halves, 5 Minute Half-Time, Ties Stand (No OT or PK’s)

Finals

Same as Bracket Play except games that are tied at the end of regulation will move directly to “kicks from the mark” (No Overtime).

Heading

No heading on small fields (U9 - U12)

Point System

- 3 points for each Win
- 1 point for each Tie
- 0 points for each Loss

Sportsmanship

Teams will receive a one (1) point deduction for any coach who receives a Red Card (ejection).

Forfeits

All forfeits will be determined by the Tournament Committee. A forfeit will be scored as a 4-0 win.

Tie Breakers

In the event of a tie in points at the end of bracket play, the teams to advance will be determined as follows:

1. The winner in head-to-head competition
2. Cumulative Goal Differential (4 goal differential is maximum counted in any one game).
3. Most Goals Scored (4 goals for is maximum counted in any one game)
4. Fewest Goals Allowed (4 goals against is maximum counted in any one game)
5. Penalty Kicks

Three Team Ties: -

One Team Needed to Advance: Proceed through the tie breaker procedures from steps 1 to 4. After each step, if one team wins the tie breaker, that team advances. If two teams are tied and one team is below the two teams that are tied, the one team below is eliminated and the process starts from Step 1 with the two remaining teams.

Two Teams Needed to Advance: Proceed through the tie breaker procedures from steps 1 to 4. After each step, if one team wins the tie breaker, that team advances and the process starts from step 1 with the two remaining teams. If two teams are tied and one team is below the other two teams, the two teams tied advance and the one team below is eliminated. The two teams that advance, then return to step 1 to determine order of advancement.

Home and Visiting Teams

7v7 games: The home team is listed first and will kick off in the first half. The teams will sit on the same side of the field (om the middle). Parents and spectators should sit directly across on the same side. The visiting team will choose the goal to defend. Home teams should wear their dark jersey and are responsible for changing, if deemed necessary by the referees. Home teams will provide 3 game balls for the match.

9v9 and 11v11 games: The home team is listed first and will kick off in the first half. The home team should sit on the North or West side of the field. The visiting team will choose the goal to defend. Home teams should wear their dark jersey and are responsible for changing, if deemed necessary by the referees. Home teams will provide 3 game balls for the match. Teams and their spectators will sit on opposite sides of the field. Team benches should be on the half where the Assistant Referee runs the line.

Bracket Play

- 4 Teams: 3 game Round Robin bracket play, Playoff seeding determined by points
- 5 Teams: 4 game Round Robin bracket play, Final order determined by points
- 6 Teams: 3 game cross bracket play, Playoff seeding determined by points regardless of bracket (Wildcards)
- 8 Teams: 4 game intra bracket play, Playoff seeding determined by points within each bracket
- 10 Teams: Bracket of 4 plays within their bracket, two groups of 3 play cross bracket, Playoff seeding determined by points regardless of bracket (Wildcards)

Additional Rules

Other than the exceptions based on the tournament format (such as game length), FIFA and US Club Soccer rules will apply.

Weather

In cases of extreme weather, the referees may allow for a hydration break midway through each half.

Fire

In case of poor air quality, games may be shortened or canceled. This is considered a natural “act of God” that is beyond the control of the tournament hosts.

Coaches

Only adults with a credentialed pass may be in the technical (coaching/team bench) area.

Sportsmanship

No coach, player, or substitute makes derogatory remarks or gestures to the referees, other coaches, players, substitutes or team officials.

No coach, player, or substitute uses profanity or incites, in any manner, disruptive behavior.

Any disruptive behavior by parents or spectators, such as profanity, coaching, fighting or other behavior that is not sportsmanlike, is not accepted and will not be tolerated. Teams can be removed from the tournament per the Tournament Committee if they feel the team sideline is out of control. Consumption of alcohol is not permitted at the complex.

Ejections

A Red Card (ejection) will result in a minimum of a 1 game suspension. Additional games may be given, depending on the severity of the infraction. The tournament committee will determine if any additional games should be served.

Disputes

The Tournament Committee will handle all disputes that are non-referee decisions. Decisions by referees may not be appealed and any decision made on a dispute by the Tournament Committee will be final and may not be appealed.

