

## SWFL Pre-Season Cup COMPETITION RULES

September 12-14, 2025

**Headquarters:** 5490 Lakewood Ranch Blvd – Lakewood Ranch, FL

### REGISTRATION & TEAM ELIGIBILITY:

This Tournament shall be open to all teams composed 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.

- Pre-Tournament Online Check is required for all teams.
- At the field before each game. Teams should be available for check-in with the referee or field marshal 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
- Documentation required at initial Pre-Tournament Online Check-In:

#### *Teams from the United States:*

- The Players and bench personnel must present picture identification cards issued by the team's federation Organization Member (USYS, US Club, AYSO, USSSA, others)
- Identification cards must be verified, photo attached and laminated (if your association does not allow lamination, cards must be encased in plastic sleeves).
- Teams from a US Youth Soccer National State Association outside of Florida must provide/upload proof of permission to travel (if outside Region III).
- Teams must provide/upload a certified/approved tournament roster from the team's Federation Organization.
- Teams must provide/upload a completed medical release form for every player.
- Teams must provide payment to be accepted.

#### *Teams coming from a Concacaf nation:*

- Players must present passports at registration or, if from a nation that the US does not require a passport, proof of entry into the United States that is required by the US.
- Teams are required to have present player picture identification cards.
- Must provide a letter or form from its Provincial or National Association approving the team's travel and participation in the tournament.
- Multiple divisions within an age group are not guaranteed but may be offered when a sufficient number of teams apply to that age group. The decision of the Tournament Committee for the placement of teams within age groups with multiple divisions is final.
- Falsification of player registration forms, team rosters, player passes, or other records used in the tournament will result in immediate disqualification of the team from the competition and shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including disbarment for the individual(s) involved.

### PRE-GAME PROCEDURES:

Documentation required for pre-game check-in:

#### All Teams:

- Teams are required to have in their possession and be able to present player and bench personnel picture identification cards if requested. Rosters signed and verified by tournament officials will suffice.
- Identification cards may be checked against the tournament's generated frozen rosters listed on match reports.
- Teams must have on hand a tournament roster and passes from the team's Federation Organization in case of any discrepancies with the tournament generated game reports.
- U13-U19. The game roster shall have a maximum of 18 players. Players not listed on the game roster are allowed to sit on the bench in the team's opposite uniform or in street clothes.
- Each team is limited to (4) coaches on the bench, all of which must be listed on the team roster. In no case will a team be allowed to participate without a properly registered coach or assistant approved by a tournament official.

- The jersey number of each player should be the same as the player's jersey number on the tournament roster.
- 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 center referee.
- Only at 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 Credentials Committee). A late arriving player may be challenged at the time he/she is allowed to participate by the Referee.
- ANY TEAM USING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER WILL FORFEIT ALL TOURNAMENT MATCHES PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. A report will be filed with the offending teams national Organization or National State Association. If you are not sure of a player's eligibility, ask the Tournament Director.

In the case of lost or stolen ID cards the tournament committee reserves the right to use alternate identification or make tournament specific ID cards.

**MANDATORY:** All teams, except as noted below, are subject to book lodging through the designated travel provider as a condition to compete at the event.

- Teams that are located within a 75-mile driving distance of the tournament headquarters are not required to book.
- All teams over 75 miles are expected to book with the designated travel provider as a condition to compete – no exceptions.
- Addresses used for the determination of the distance will be the physical address of the Club's home fields.
  1. Google Maps TM or other approved online mapping services will be used to determine driving distance.

**All teams must upload required online check in documents immediately after applying to ensure acceptance. For Clubs/States that do not use Gotsoccer, each team must enter a roster complete with bench personnel into the tournament's on-line tournament system (Gotsoccer). The minimum required information is Name, Date of Birth, player ID number, uniform number and gender. Revisions can be made to the roster up to the Monday prior to the event. This information will appear on the tournament match reports to be used by the referees for check-in on the field prior to each game. Teams failing to input this information are subject to removal from the event.**

**PLAYER AND AGE ELIGIBILITY:**

- For this tournament, the age classifications are as follows:  
U8 through U19 Boys & Girls teams
- A team using guest players may have no more than five (5) guest players depending on age group.
  - Guest players must have permission to participate/travel from their National and State Association, Federation or any other USSF affiliated organization. Teams may only have guest/loan players from the same Federation organization, and all players must be legally registered through their respective Federation organization. (i.e., USYS teams can only have players with USYS passes; US Club teams may only have players with US Club passes, etc.)
- Club pass players are allowed and will not count towards the 5-guest player maximum.

**BIRTH YEAR CHART**

SEASON 2025-26										
Birth Year	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Age Group	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19

**PLAYING UP GUIDELINES**

- Players in the U9 to U14 age groups will be allowed to roster up to 2 years, subject to the restriction that no player may participate in any sanctioned competition in which heading is permitted before their 11th birthday.
- Players in the U15 and older age groups will be allowed to roster up to any older age groups. There will be no exception to the above guidelines.
- Players can play for only one more team in the tournament in a different age group respecting the above-mentioned

guidelines. Limited to 2 players per team. No player is allowed to participate in more than 2 (two) games per day. It is at the discretion of the tournament staff to determine player eligibility on a roster.

#### **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 her/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 parents 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.

#### **ORTHOPEDIC POLICY 402.2:**

- 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.

#### **HEADING GUIDELINES:**

- 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.

**LAWS OF THE GAME:** All matches must be played in accordance with the FIFA laws of the Game, except as specifically modified as follows in the tournament rules.

#### **LAW 1: Field of Play**

U13 - U19 No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game"

U9 & U10 (7v7) and U11 & U12 (9v9) must play in accordance with the US Youth Soccer Official under 12 & 10 Playing Initiatives.

#### **LAW 2: The Ball**

U13 and older Size #5

U12 and younger Size #4

#### **LAW 3: Number of Players**

\* U13 and Older Eleven (11) per side per FIFA - minimum players 7

U11 and U12 Nine (9) per side - minimum players 8

U9 and U10 Seven (7) per side - minimum players 6

#### **SUBSTITUTION TIME:**

Substitutions shall be unlimited. Players may substitute at any stoppage of the ball with the referee's permission. 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. When an injured player (inclusive of the goalkeeper) is attended to on the field of play, the player must leave the field of play for treatment and evaluation. A substitution may be made for the injured player.

## **SUBSTITUTION AGE LIMITS**

U9-U19 ages, free substitution is allowed. No national team as designated by the National Associations of FIFA will be accepted to compete at this event.

### **LAW 4: Players' Equipment Player**

Equipment must conform to FIFA rules. All players will wear shin-guards (under socks). A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry). Player equipment shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Affiliate and FIFA rules. *Additionally:*

- a) Screw in cleats are permitted; however, judgment 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 judgment as to its safety is at the discretion of the referee.
- c) No player is allowed to wear ANY jewelry while participating in the tournament. 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.
- d) 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.
- e) The designated home team per the tournament schedule will be required to wear white/light color jerseys. In cases where the schedule does not designate a home team the first team listed on the game report will be considered the home team.
- f) 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 official USSF or a tournament specific game report to the Site Director containing any information relating to any game incident involving players/coach, spectator misconduct, or injuries.

In the event, the assigned referees fail to appear, and the assignor and/or Site Director fail to provide a replacement, the senior assigned assistant referee shall assume the duties and shall find an alternate assistant.

The game will be played as scheduled and will be deemed official.

### **LAW 6: The Assistant Referee**

Two (2) assistant referees will be used in matches U11 and above. A single center referee with no assistant referees will be used for U9 and U10 7v7 matches.

In the event, the assigned assistant(s) fails to appear; the referee must find suitable replacements.

The game will be played as scheduled and be deemed official.

### **LAW 7: The Duration of the Match**

Due to the extreme heat at this time of year and multiple games played in one day, all games will be played per age group as follows:

POOL PLAY:

U8-U12 2X25 = 50

U13-U14 2X30=60

U15-U19 2X35 = 70

5-minute halftime per each game

No Overtime in Semi's or Finals/ PK's to determine winner of semi or final if tied after regulation.

### **LAW 8 - 10: No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game".**

**LAW 11: Offside: U11 - U19: No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game".**

**U9 - U10: Offside will be called in accordance with the US Youth Soccer Official under 10 Playing Recommendations.**

**Law 12-17** No change per FIFA "Laws of the Game."

### **TOURNAMENT & MATCH SCHEDULES**

- During the preliminary stage of the tournament teams will play in a World Cup pool play format. Ties shall remain.
- Minimum number of teams at any age/flight is 4; maximum is 32.
- The tournament reserves the right to have multiple flights within an age group.
- All teams are guaranteed a minimum of 3 scheduled games.
- Maximum number of games is 6.
- Teams can play up to 2 games in one day.
- A minimum of one time slot for rest purposes will be scheduled between games.
  - Groups of 6 teams or less will go directly to finals or may play a round robin with no finals. Champion determined by points.
  - Groups of 7 teams or more will have consolation or semi [1] finals and finals.
  - The Wildcard or best 2nd will always be considered the lowest seed. If the teams have the same number of points, the criteria in the "Determination of Group Winners" will be used to break the tie. Playoff pairings will be as shown on the tournament schedule. If the Wildcard is scheduled to play a team they have already played the schedule may be revised for the Wildcard to play the highest seed group winner available. This will only be done if the schedule can be arranged so all playoff matches have teams that have not already played. If this cannot be done, then matches will revert back to the original schedule.

### **POST GAME PROCEDURES:**

- As a mutual courtesy, the tournament committee asks that both teams congratulate each other for a game well played. Manager/Coach of both teams will make sure their respective sideline areas are clean, and all trash is in the containers provided.
- Manager/Coach of each team will confirm the score as reported on the Game report with the Tournament Official and mark their initials on the Game report.
- Referees will return the completed game report, supplemental report for send-offs, injuries and special circumstances to the Site Director (or Tournament Official).

### **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 Site Director has the authority and responsibility to remove any person(s) from the tournament for abuses of conduct, in addition to any specific disciplinary action brought about by any other authority.
- Tournament Field Marshals will be present at games to assist.
- Also, these rules will apply:
  - The Site Directors will designate one sideline for players and the opposite sidelines for spectators.
  - Team Managers/Coaches will be responsible for the behavior of their fans. If the referee warns any coach about their fans' behavior, and the behavior does not improve, the coach can be sent off by the referee.

### **CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE:**

- 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.

**FORFEITS:**

A minimum of seven (7) players (ages U13-U19) constitutes a game. Games should start at the given start time. In case the team does not have seven (7) players present, there will be a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes grace period before awarding the game to the opponent. A forfeit will be scored 4-0. Modified Forfeit Rule: U9-U10 (6) players constitute a game. U11-U12 (8) players constitute a game. In no case shall a team which forfeits a game be declared a flight winner, group winner, division winner or wild card team. The team with the next best record will advance.

**PROTEST 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.

**DETERMINATION OF GROUP WINNERS:**

There will be no overtime games in qualifying play. Standings in a group will be determined by the following game points: 3 points for win, 1 for tie, 0 for loss.

*The Tournament Committee will use the criteria below in determining the advancement of teams. In the result of multiple teams tied, the criteria will be followed to either 'Advance' or 'Eliminate' a team at which time they will then go to the Two Teams Tied and start with 2nd criteria to determine advancement.*

**IF TWO TEAMS TIE IN TOTAL POINTS:**

- FIRST:** Head-to-Head result
- SECOND:** Net goal differential with a maximum of six goals per game.
- THIRD:** Most goals scored up to six per game.
- FOURTH:** Least Goals Allowed
- FIFTH:** Most Shutouts
- SIXTH:** Penalty Kicks according to FIFA Taking of Kicks from the penalty mark

**IF THREE OR MORE TEAMS TIE IN TOTAL POINTS:** (except in the case of example 3 below) **FIRST:** Net goal differential with a maximum of six goals per game.

- SECOND:** Most goals scored up to 6 per game.
- THIRD:** Least Goals Allowed **FOURTH:** Most Shutouts
- FOURTH:** Penalty Kicks according to FIFA Taking of Kicks from the penalty mark

**Example 1:** (4 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and have all defeated each other. Team 1 has a goal differential of +6, team 2 is +4 and team 3 is +2. Team 1 is 1st, team 2 is 2nd, and team 3 is 3rd.

**Example 2:** (4 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and have all defeated each other. Team 1 has a goal differential of +4, team 2 is +4 and team 3 is +2. Team 3 is 3rd, Team 2 defeated Team 1 therefore team 2 is 1st and team 1 is 2nd.

**Example 3:** (6 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and Team 1 has defeated the other two. The Team who has beaten the other two will advance. The tie breaking procedure begins for the remaining tied teams with number 1.

**DETERMINATION OF SEMI-FINAL (if applicable) AND FINAL GAME WINNERS** - In semi-final and final games, if the game is not decided after regulation times, they will go directly to penalty kicks.

**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.
- 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.
  - In the overall standings, 3 points will be given for the win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss.
  - The 1-0 win in penalty kicks will not be counted for or against to determine the tiebreaker for advancement.
  - If regular games have been played in the bracket and the Tournament Director has determined that other games go to penalty kicks due to inclement weather or field conditions, the regular games score will revert back to a 1-0 win or 0-0 tie.

Only referees or tournament directors 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.

#### **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.

##### Pool play matches:

In the event a referee terminates a match (different from temporarily suspending), before half time, it will be up to the Tournament Director whether to record the score at the time of the termination or finish the game at a rescheduled time and location.

In the event a referee terminates a match (different from suspending) after half time the score will be recorded, as it was when the game was stopped and declared official.

##### Play-off matches:

In the event a referee terminates a match (different from suspending) the score will be recorded as it was when the game was stopped.

In the event, a match, other than the final, ends in a tie, the team that earned the most points during the round robin play will be declared the winner. If the teams have the same number of points, the criteria in the DIVISION RANKING CRITERIA will be used to break the tie.

##### Final Matches:

In the event, a referee terminates a final match (different from suspending) while the teams are tied, co-champions will be declared.

Both teams will receive championship trophies.

## CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL CEREMONY

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

**REFUNDS:** 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 the team has not been accepted.
- Tournament cancellation (partial refunds could be paid including less all tournament expenses)
- Within ten (10) days of request of withdrawal of the application by a team before acceptance of the application by the tournament.

## GENERAL:

- The Tournament Committee, and the host affiliate will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by tournament participants (including, without limitation, for travel, lodging, or meals) if the tournament is delayed, postponed, canceled, or otherwise altered for any reason.
- The Tournament Committee's interpretation of the preceding rules shall be final.
- The Tournament Director(s) reserve the right to decide all matters pertaining to the tournament and may, in their sole discretion, delay, postpone, or cancel the tournament, or otherwise alter the tournament structure (such as the duration of and/or number of games for teams). The decision of the Tournament Director(s) on these matters shall be final and shall not entitle any team to a refund or other return of entry fees paid, except as provided below (subject to any exception set out below, entry fees are non-refundable).
  - If the tournament is canceled for any reason before any tournament matches are played, teams will receive a refund or credit (against entry fees for a future FL Premier FC tournament) in an amount to be determined in the sole discretion of the Executive Committee of the tournament after taking into consideration the non-recoverable costs, expenses, and resources incurred/expended by the tournament.
  - The determination of the amount of the credit/refund, and issuance of any credit/refund, may take up to 180 days after cancellation.
- Outside of complete tournament cancellation, other circumstances may arise in which the FL Premier Spring Showcase tournament, based on the totality of circumstances, decide to provide a refund of some or all of team entry fees (or for particular teams based on impacts from weather and other circumstances). Any such decision to alter the no-refund policy is in the sole and absolute discretion of the FL Premier Spring Showcase, and any such decision shall not constitute a binding commitment with respect to future similar circumstances or other teams.
- If not, enough teams are realized within a single age group, the Tournament Director shall notify the participants as soon as possible. The participants will be given the option to play up or receive a full refund.
- The Tournament Committee has the responsibility to uphold any previous suspension imposed by USSYS, and other USSF affiliate organizations as required.
- The Tournament Committee agrees to have a copy of the Tournament Rules at all game sites.

Prohibited items: Smoking is not allowed on the sidelines and other areas as marked at each site.

- Alcohol, drugs, etc. are strictly prohibited at all locations at all times.
- Pets and animals, except seeing eye and other “working” dogs, are not allowed.
- Noisemakers and amplification devices deemed disruptive to play by site and tournament officials are not allowed during play.
- Participants and spectators are reminded to be respectful of all officials and game sites and are reminded to pick up after themselves and utilize the trash receptacles found throughout the complex.
- NO player, parent or coach may approach the referee after a game to discuss the officiating of the game. If this happens, the offender may be removed from the facility for the rest of the weekend. There is a ZERO tolerance for any referee abuse (verbal or physical).
- All VEOs, Hudls, cameras, recording or other apparatus must be placed on the parent side of the field. No equipment shall be on the side of the teams or referees.



**TEAM WITHDRAWAL**

- All Registrations must be complete and submitted 30 days prior to first kick-off day of tournament to guarantee consideration.
- All late applications will be put on a waitlist for review.
- Upon acceptance, the fee is non-refundable. If your team is accepted and later withdraws, the entry fee is non-refundable.