

Alabama Youth Soccer Association Division I State Cup Rules & Regulations

U13 and Older Competition

I. Tournament Sanction and Officials

The Alabama State Championship (or State Cup) is a tournament sanctioned and conducted annually by the Alabama Youth Soccer Association (AYSA) for competition among boys and girls teams in the Under-13 through Under-19 age groups. It is a part of and a qualifying event for the US Youth Soccer Regional and National Championships sanctioned and conducted by US Youth Soccer. In addition to the Rules listed therein, all other applicable AYSA rules and US Youth Soccer National Championship rules are in force. Winners of the Alabama State Championship advance to the US Youth Soccer Region III Tournament of Champions (except u13 winners who do not play in Regionals). Region III winners advance to the US Youth Soccer National Championship. The AYSA State Cup is conducted under the direction of the State Cup Tournament Director.

Any matters not provided for in this policy shall be decided by the Tournament Committee, and its decisions are final. In order to continue to improve the games, this manual may be updated by the Tournament Committee and redistributed.

II. Eligibility of Teams and Players

- A. **Eligibility.** State Cup competition is open to the teams of any member in good standing of the Alabama Youth Soccer Association. Teams and players must be properly registered with AYSA and US Youth Soccer for the current seasonal year (August 1 to July 31). Teams must compete in Division I of the AYSA state league, which would include the Region III Premier League, in an age group that participates in the State Cup competition, consisting of at least four (4) teams with the team playing at least three (3) league games against different opponents during the seasonal year (except the u19 age group which does not have to meet this requirement). This competition is not open to state select teams.

- B. **Team Roster Size and Continuity.** A team may not have more than the maximum number of players allowed by US Youth Soccer. Teams that can have a maximum of 18 players must demonstrate continuity of rosters between the league and National Championships competitions by maintaining a minimum of 9 players common to the roster of both competitions, and teams that can have a maximum of 22 players must demonstrate continuity of rosters between the league and National Championships competitions by maintaining a minimum of 11 players

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common to the roster of both competitions. A team is limited to five (5) previously rostered players during a seasonal year.

- C. **Age Group Entered.** A team must enter the competition in the age group corresponding to the age of its oldest player.
- D. **Team Rosters.** All teams entering the State Cup must obtain an official AYSA Roster signed and sealed by the AYSA registrar at the pre-tournament check-in. Rosters are frozen at a date chosen by the AYSA Board of Directors. After the roster is frozen,
1. No player changes are allowed (no "adds" or transfers).
 2. A team and its players shall be considered to have competed in the State Cup competition for that seasonal year, whether or not the team or players actually play in a State Cup game.

Teams and players may compete in only one (1) State Cup competition in a seasonal year.

E. **Game Rosters**

1. U13, u14, and u15 teams will use their official, tournament stamped roster, as their game roster.
2. U16, U17, u18 and u19 teams will provide the referee a game roster of eligible players prior to each match. The game roster shall have a maximum of 18 eligible players and a minimum of 7 players. Every player on the game roster must be listed on the team roster.

F. **Roster Changes.**

1. All transfers must be completed prior to the published State Cup roster freeze date in order for a player to be eligible for State Cup.

Transfers are governed by all applicable rules of US Youth Soccer and AYSA. It is the responsibility of the coach and/or team official that has changed its roster to ensure that the AYSA or their representative verifies the change.

- G. **Player Age Verification.** Every player's age must be verified by AYSA. Failure to satisfy these requirements will result in the team being dropped from the competition and the players being ineligible to compete with any other team in that year's Cup competition.

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H. **Eligibility Rule Violations.** Violations of player or team eligibility rules will result in the forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible team or player has participated. Any coach or team official found to have rostered an ineligible player is, together with the team, ineligible to compete further in State Cup competition in the current and the next seasonal year. The coach is ultimately responsible for verifying player eligibility.

III. Competition Announcement, Applications, Deadlines and Withdrawals

A. **Competition Announcement.** The announcement of State Cup competition will be published on or about four months prior to the competition. The Competition Announcement will include an application process and other pertinent information about competition dates, age groups eligible to participate, entry fees and other requirements.

B. **Application Form.** The application form must be filled out completely, submitted by the team coach or manager. The application must be submitted online and be accompanied by the entry fee prior to the deadline.

C. **Performance Bond.** Each team participating in the State Cup must post a \$400.00 performance bond upon entering the team in the AYSA state league. This performance bond shall be in the form of a check must be made payable to AYSA with the name of the team placed on the check. A club may submit one check for any or all of its teams participating. The bond will be returned to the team/club in accordance with State League Guidelines. In all cases, the performance bond will be held until the conclusion of the State Cup. A team's performance bond will be forfeited by:

- A team's failure to be ready to play at the scheduled time plus grace period of any game.
- A team's failure to participate in the entire awards ceremony if that team is a participant in the championship game.
- A team forfeits any match.
- A team that withdraws from the state cup after the deadline to withdraw as set by the Tournament committee

If a performance bond is forfeited, then a new performance bond must be posted before the team may continue as a part of the tournament.

D. **Deadlines.** Unless otherwise noted in the Competition Announcement, the division of age groups will be as indicated below. The official application

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deadline for each season will be published in the Competition Announcement, but will occur on or about the dates indicated below:

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<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Application Deadline</u>
<i>Fall Competition</i> U15, U16, U17, U18	On or about Sep 15 at 5:00 p.m.
<i>Spring Competition</i> U13, U14, U19	On or about April 1 at 5:00 p.m.

- E. **Withdrawals.** Notice of intent to withdraw must be made to the Tournament Director prior to the withdrawal deadline. A team that withdraws its application at any time after will forfeit its entry fee and bond. AYSA may place the club/association and all of its teams in bad standing, for a team/club not providing notice of withdrawal prior to tournament, rendering them ineligible to compete in any AYSA-sanctioned event.
- F. **Forfeits.** A forfeit during the competition shall be considered a withdrawal and subject to the appropriate fines and penalties.

Should a team in round-robin competition forfeit any match, official game scores for all of that team's games shall be recorded as 3-0 losses. A team that forfeits a match will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.

- G. **Regional and National Obligations.** Teams representing AYSA at the Regional and National competitions must observe all US Youth Soccer rules and guidelines for those events. This includes, but is not limited to, the requirement that all Alabama teams are required to house their players in the designated Alabama hotels as announced by the Cup Chair. If it is determined that a team or its players have violated these rules and guidelines, a fine of up to \$500 may be imposed by AYSA and that teams club or association may not be eligible to enter teams in the next year's State Cup.
- H. **Payment Obligations.** Any amount owed by a team in connection with a State Cup competition is an obligation of the team's club/association. If any amount remains unpaid after notice, AYSA may place the club/association and all of its teams in bad standing, rendering them ineligible to compete in any AYSA-sanctioned event.

IV. Competition Format, the Draw and Seeding

- A. **Competition Format.** Each seasonal year, AYSA will conduct a tournament to determine a State Cup winner in each designated State Cup

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age group. If necessary, play-in games will be used to determine the round-robin teams.

B. Advancement. Play-in games are single elimination games, i.e. the winner advances and the loser is out of the tournament. Teams eliminated in single elimination games will receive no refund of their entry fee.

1. Winners of a round robin group will be determined on a point basis as follows:
 - three (3) points for a win,
 - one (1) point for a tie,
 - zero (0) points for a loss.

Tie games will be allowed with no overtime played during the round-robin portion of the tournament.

2. Tiebreakers

In the event teams are tied on the basis of points, the following tiebreakers will be considered in order until the tie is broken:

- A. Winner of head-to-head competition. (This criteria is not used if more than two teams are tied.)
- B. Most wins.
- C. Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD) which is computed as goals for minus goals against with a maximum of 3 NGD per game.
- D. Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker);
- E. Team with most goals (maximum of 3 goals per game).
- F. Kicks from penalty spot per FIFA law.

3. More than Two Teams Tied

- A. If more than two (2) teams are tied, the sequence will be followed until a team is eliminated. The remaining teams will then restart the sequence at 2B above, until the tie is broken.
- B. If three teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA Kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw by the tournament committee. The first team drawn will receive the bye; the next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of FIFA

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Kicks. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in FIFA Kicks to determine the winner. The bye team will be the home team.

C. If four teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA Kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw conducted by the tournament committee. The first team drawn (home team) will compete against the 2nd team drawn (away team) in the first contest of FIFA Kicks. The third team drawn (home team) will compete against the fourth team (away team) in the second contest. The winners of these two contests will then compete to determine the winner. The winner of first/second draw will be the home team.

4. In elimination, semi- or final-round matches, tie games will not be permitted. Overtime and kicks from the penalty mark, if necessary, will be used to determine a winner in each match.

A. **Seeding.** Standings will be kept for all state league brackets and used as one device for determining seeding for the DI State Cup. All seeding will be determined by the SLC with the final seeding determination made by the state DOC. The seeds will be posted as soon as they are available.

V. Game Sites

As a condition of acceptance into the competition, applicants must agree to play anywhere they are scheduled within the State of Alabama. Team officials are expected to inform their players and parents of this requirement prior to entering the competition. Game sites are assigned (and may be re-assigned) by the Tournament Director, taking into account field availability, referee availability, travel distances, weather considerations, and scheduling efficiency.

VI. Club or Association and Team Obligations

In the event of play-in games, the designated home team's club or association must provide the use of a field. The home team will be the team with the better seed. This requirement may be waived with the prior permission of the Cup Chair.

A. **Team Availability.** Pursuant to US Youth Soccer rules, State Cup games take precedence over all other games. State Cup game dates will be

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published in advance, but due to weather contingencies, these must be regarded as subject to change. Teams should plan to be available every day from the start of the competition until the final match.

VII. Game Officials

- A. Three (3) officials shall be assigned for each State Cup match by the State Youth Referee Assignor. The Tournament Director shall be responsible for notifying the State Youth Referee Assignor of requirements for officials.

VIII. Rules of Play

Applicable Documents include:

- FIFA "Laws of the Game" as amended annually
- USYSA National Championship Rules (current revision)
- ASA Constitution and Bylaws
- ASA Meeting Minutes
- ASA Annual Calendar
- ASA Policy and Procedures
- ASA State League Guidelines
- AYSA Rules and Regulations

Except as modified herein, the FIFA Laws of the Game with AYSA modifications shall govern all State Cup play.

A. General Rules of Play

Both teams and a maximum of four (4) team officials for each team shall take the same side of the field. Spectators shall take the other side of the field.

No artificial noisemakers are permitted.

The home team shall provide the game ball.

Each field player shall wear a numbered jersey. The number shall be affixed to the back of the jersey and shall be clearly visible. Each player must wear a different number. Numbered jerseys for goalkeepers are optional in State Cup competition (but are required in Regional and National competitions). Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from other players and referees.

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The away team shall have choice of colors. In the event of a conflict, the home team must change if so directed by the referee.

The home team shall make available on request a copy of these Rules and Procedures for the referee or State Cup officials.

B. Pre-Game Procedures

Both teams must provide an official Roster to the referee.

Each team must present for inspection by the referee a copy of its current, Roster and its US Youth Soccer Player Passes. The referee or his/her official designee must check the US Youth Soccer Player Passes against (1) the players, (2) the approved Roster to verify each player's identity and to verify consistency of the documents. Checking passes, players and rosters may not be waived by the referee or the coaches. The referee may prohibit the participation of a player whose identity cannot be verified or whose documents are inconsistent or improper.

Each team must have in its possession at the game site, and must make available on request of the referee, or a State Cup official, its original, current, approved AYSA State Cup Roster and a US Youth Soccer Player Pass for each player. All teams entering State Cup are required to have their US Youth Soccer Player Passes laminated with pictures affixed and proper signatures prior to the credential check at the team official's pre-tournament meeting.

C. Grace Period

Games must start when scheduled except:

A fifteen (15) minute grace period is given to each team to present its AYSA Tournament roster and US Youth Soccer player passes to the referee for inspection. Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the match by the referee. The Tournament Director will determine if the team shall forfeit the match with no right of appeal.

A fifteen (15) minute grace period is given to a team which cannot field eleven (11) players at game time. After fifteen (15) minutes, the game will start provided that the team has at least seven (7) players. If less than seven (7) players are present at the end of the grace period, the team

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forfeits with no right of appeal.

D. Game Duration, Overtime, and Ball Requirements

Games shall consist of two halves of equal duration in accordance with the Age Group Specifications appearing below.

In all play-in, semi-final and final games, if a game is tied at the end of regulation time, following a five (5) minute rest period; the teams shall play 2 complete overtime periods. The duration of the overtime will be in accordance with the Age Group Specifications appearing below. The teams will change ends between halves. No rest period is allowed between overtime halves.

If a game is tied at the end of overtime, the tie shall be resolved by a contest of penalty kicks in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Round robin games may end in a tie with no overtime to be played.

Ball sizes and specifications shall be in accordance with the Age Group Specifications appearing below.

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Length of Regulation ½</i>	<i>Length of Overtime ½</i>
U-19	45 minutes	10 minutes
U-18	45 minutes	10 minutes
U-17	45 minutes	10 minutes
U-16	40 minutes	10 minutes
U-15	40 minutes	10 minutes
U-14	35 minutes	5 minutes
U-13	35 minutes	5 minutes

All age groups use a #5 size ball with a circumference of 27-28” and weighing 14-16 ounces.

E. Substitutions

Substitutions are unlimited and may occur at the following times with the consent of the referee:

- Prior to a throw-in by the team in possession.
- Prior to goal kick by either team.

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- After a goal by either team.
- To replace an injured player. The opposing team shall be permitted to substitute as well.
- For a cautioned player
- At half time.

F. Ejections

If a player or coach is dismissed from any match, the player or coaches' pass, together with the game report of the incident shall be turned over to the Tournament Committee or its designee by the referee

Players or coaches ejected from a State Cup game are prohibited from participation in the next following US Youth Soccer National Championship game, whether it is the next Alabama State Cup match, the first match of Regional competition, or the first Alabama State Cup match of the following seasonal year. (State Cup suspensions are served only in connection with US Youth Soccer National Championship games and have no bearing on league play.) Ejections and cautions issued in connection with State Cup play may be referred to the AYSA Tournament Committee for further disciplinary action. The player's pass shall be returned to the player's coach/manager following the disciplinary period.

Note: Since some coaches coach more than one team, game suspension(s) will apply to the team for which the coach received the ejection.

G. Cautions

Cautions, unlike ejections, do not accumulate nor do they have any affect on a player's eligibility at the next level of play (Region III Championships).

H. Terminated Games

Games terminated due to inclement weather, darkness, or for other reasons (assuming neither team was at fault), even during FIFA penalty kicks, may be re-played in their entirety. If a match is abandoned for cause due to actions of a team, coach or spectators, the Tournament Committee shall determine whether to allow the score at the time of termination to stand, to forfeit the match in favor of the non-offending team, or to replay the match in its entirety. The referee shall report, with explanation, all abandoned games to the Tournament Committee or its designee within one

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hour of the termination. The final decision to replay a game rests with the Tournament Director.

I. Protests

- A. All protests that relate to the qualification of competitors or interpretation of the playing rules shall be referred to the AYSA Tournament Committee or designee. The tournament Committee shall then refer the protest to the Protest and Appeals Committee appointed by the Tournament Committee. The decisions of the latter Committee shall be binding. Tournament format, seeding, schedules and venue selections may not be protested. Judgment decisions of the referee are not subject to appeal or protest-including red cards.
- B. To be valid and eligible for consideration, each protest, when filed must include:
 1. The protest must be lodged verbally with the referee and the opposing coach at the game site before entering the field of play or before leaving the game site.
 2. A fee in the amount of \$200.00 to the Tournament Committee (cash, cashier's check or money order only) with the protest submitted in writing which must include a description of the grounds on which the protest is being lodged and all supporting documentation. If the protest or appeal is upheld, the fee paid will be refunded in its entirety.
 3. The tournament committee must receive all protests within (2) hours of the competition of the game being protested.
 4. Any protest relating to the grounds, goal posts, bars, or other appurtenances of the game shall be entertained only if an objection has been lodged with the referee and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
 5. When a protest is properly lodged, the Tournament Director will notify the team against which such protest is made and shall relay the protest and all particulars to that team, which will then have the right to defend its case, with

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or without witnesses. A lawyer shall not represent a team at the hearing of a charge or protest unless he/she is a bonafide member of one of the teams concerned (on the AYSA team roster).

6. A plea of ignorance to the rules and regulations of this competition is not sufficient grounds for appeals or protest. Violators may expect appropriate action by the AYSA.

NOTE: US Youth Soccer stipulates that all decisions at all levels of the appeal process shall stand and be in full force and effect until changed by a higher authority.

J. Post-Game Procedures

The Game Report will be completed by the referee including cautions and ejections, if any. The completed report must be signed by the referee and assistant referees as well as the team coaches and or managers.

K. Special Requirements for Championship Games

Awards will be presented after each championship game. The location of the awards ceremony will be set prior to the tournament. Failure to participate in this ceremony will result in a forfeit of your performance bond. For the winning team, approximately thirty minutes after the final match, player verifications and document checks will also be conducted by a designated AYSA official at or near the game site. The team will be provided three copies of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Roster, printed on Blue paper, at this check-in. Players will be required to sign this Roster in the presence of a representative of the AYSA. The coach or team manager must also sign the US Youth Soccer National Championship Roster. (Players absent from the finals may sign the National Championship Roster at the Region III Tournament.)

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IX. Tournament Playing Format

12 Team Group

A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4
8	7	6	5
9	10	11	12

If 13, 14 or 15 teams enter an age group teams will play into a 12 team group.

Round Robin: 2 games

Semis: Winner A v Winner D
Winner B v Winner C

Final: Winner A/D v Winner B/C

10 Team Group

A	B
1	2
4	3
5	6
8	7
9	10

If 11 teams enter an age group teams will play into a 10 team group.

Round Robin: 4 games

Semis: Winner A v 2nd B
Winner B v 2nd A

Final: Winner A/2ndB v Winner Bv2ndA

8 Team Group

A	B
1	2
4	3
5	6
8	7

If 9 teams enter an age group teams will play into an 8 team group.

Round Robin: 3 games

Semis: Winner A v 2nd B
Winner B v 2nd A

Final: Winner A/2ndB v Winner Bv2ndA

6 Team Group

A	B
1	2
4	3
5	6

If 7 teams enter an age group teams will play into a 6 team group.

Round Robin: 2 games

Semis: Winner A v 2nd B
Winner B v 2nd A

Final: Winner A/2ndB v Winner Bv2ndA

4 Team Group

A
1
2
3
4

If 5 teams enter an age group teams will play into a 4 team group.

Round Robin: 3 games

Final: Two teams with highest point total

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3 Team Group

A
1
2
3

Round Robin: *2 games*

Final: Two teams with highest point total
