



2009 TOURNAMENT COMPETITION RULES

1. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION DEADLINE.

The 2009 National Cup VIII is a restricted tournament open only to those teams in good standing which hold valid US Club Soccer passcards. Those teams which do not currently hold US Club Soccer passcards must obtain them prior to competing in the event.

- a. Participants shall consist of U-11 through U-18/19 boys' and girls' teams (as of Aug. 1, 2008). Selected Regionals may include a U-18/19 bracket and participating teams in that bracket will compete in the Regional only and not advance to the National Cup Finals.
- b. There are two competitive divisions: Super Group (most competitive) and Premier. To ensure a high level of competition for all clubs, all teams shall apply to the Premier level. A tournament committee, consisting of regional club soccer coaches and members of US Club Soccer's Board of Directors, will provide input on seeding. US Club Soccer will also review all applicants' tournament and league history, if provided on the teams' initial application. In addition, several online rankings will be consulted. With all the information available, qualified teams will be promoted into the Super Group division. US Club Soccer reserves the right to determine which teams, if any, are invited to participate in the Super Group division.
- c. Teams that register 10 teams for the 2009 National Cup VIII Regionals will receive a fee waiver for an 11th team that will participate in the 2009 event.
- d. A \$100 surcharge for the National Cup VIII application fee will be implemented 30 days prior to each National Cup VIII Regional event. The application deadline is three weeks prior to the first day of each Regional event. Teams should review the Web site and application for this information. If an age group is over-subscribed, or the number of applicants cannot be accommodated in an acceptable competitive format, the following criteria can be considered in determining entries. US Club Soccer reserves the right to accept or reject any application.
 - Prior National Cup results
 - Team's competitive level (but at the Super Group level only)
 - If the U-11, U-12 or U-13 age groups are oversubscribed, consideration for entry may be given to clubs that have also entered teams in older age brackets
 - Date of a team's application, regardless of the application deadline
- e. As in previous years, a team that has applied for a 2009 National Cup VIII Regional which subsequently qualifies for a US Youth Soccer Regional, and chooses to attend the US Youth Soccer Regional instead of the US Club Soccer Regional, will receive a full refund
- f. In all other cases, the application fee is non-refundable. US Club Soccer also reserves the right to impose a \$1000 penalty for any team that drops within three weeks of the Regional for which the team applied.

2. TOURNAMENT AUTHORITY.

The Tournament Director shall have ultimate authority over all tournament competitions and discipline matters. The interpretation of the rules and all decisions of the Tournament Director are final. The Tournament Director may be assisted by Regional Competition Directors and the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee. For the purposes of these rules, the authority of any Competition Director and the Tournament Director shall be synonymous.

The Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall be appointed by the US Club Soccer Executive Director and will minimally consist of the Tournament Director, Competition Director and any US Club Soccer Board of Directors member in attendance. The US Club Soccer Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio committee member and has the authority to appoint additional members to the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee.

In all matters of discipline, with the exception of an alleged incident of misconduct towards a game official, the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall render a determination, and send a report to the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee pursuant to this section.

3. COMPETITION FORMAT.

In most cases, the competition will consist of round-robin play and a single game between two group winners on the fourth day to determine the champion. The Tournament Director, in consultation with the Tournament Rules Committee:

- a. Reserves the right to determine the size of each competitive group, and the right to alter the groups and format to account for larger or uneven numbers of teams in a given competitive division.
- b. Shall determine the schedule and start times of all games, including adequate rest time between games, and altering the schedule of one game per day where necessary.
- c. Champions in both the Super Group and Premier levels in the U-13 through U-17 age groups at each National Cup VIII Regional will advance to the National Cup VIII Finals in Virginia Beach, Va. The boys' event will be held July 25-28, 2009, while the girls will participate on July 31-Aug. 3, 2009. There is no additional entry fee for advancing to the National Cup VIII Finals.

4. ROSTER RULES.

Any player registered with and issued a passcard for a US Club Soccer member club, academy or sanctioned league team, who is a member of the designated age group or younger, is eligible to be placed on the tournament roster. No guest or loan players shall be allowed. No players may be added to a tournament roster other than pursuant to these rules unless an emergency situation arises and permission is obtained in writing from the Tournament Director.

- a. **Maximum Tournament Roster Size:** Up to 26 players. Teams are expected to register all known players by May 18 (including submitting paperwork and fees). Please note that there may be an increased wait period for passcard processing due to high demand. Individual players may be added up to any roster freeze. Note: there shall be no roster freeze for the Regional competitions. Cards issued at the tournament site are also subject to a surcharge, as set forth in Section 5c.
- b. **Playing on more than one team:** A player may play on only one team at any Regional competition, other than as set forth herein. If that team does not advance to the Finals, the player may play on another team for the same club at a later Regional competition or at the

Finals. If a player is properly dual-carded to another team with another organization, the same rule set forth above shall apply to such player. Unless properly dual-carded, a player is Cup-tied to his/her first Cup club. Under no circumstances may a player play for one team in the Cup, then be released by the club, and play for a second Cup team.

- c. **Players at National Cup Finals:** After the Regional competitions, for teams advancing to the Finals, players may be dropped or added without limitation up to the maximum roster size, as long as any new players to be added were registered with the member club or league team at the start of the team's National Cup VIII Regional competition. If the club has had tryouts since the Regional, they may add up to three new players from such tryouts that have committed to and registered with the club for the next registration year. Any other roster emergency requests shall be determined by the Tournament Director on a case-by-case basis.
- d. **Roster freeze for National Cup Finals:** 5 p.m. ET, seven (7) days prior to the team's first Finals game. Thereafter, the team's tournament roster shall be frozen. A player may only play on one Cup team during the Finals.
- e. **Game roster size:** Up to 18 players, selected from the tournament roster of up to 26 players. A U-11 (8v8) roster consists of up to 14 players selected from the tournament roster.
- f. **Substitutions:** Unlimited substitutions and unlimited re-entry. Substitutions may occur at any stoppage. However, the referee shall have discretion over all substitutions, and may refuse to allow any substitution if, in his/her opinion, the purpose is to disrupt the game.**

**In allowing for unlimited substitutions, US Club Soccer wishes to remind all coaches that it is their responsibility to handle their substitutions in a professional manner so as not to detract from the game.

5. **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS.**

- a. Valid US Club Soccer player passcards and a US Club Soccer official roster.
- b. Valid US Club Soccer staff passcards will be required for all coaches and the team manager.
- c. Teams are expected to register all known players by May 1, 2009.
- d. **Player/Staff Surcharges:**
A surcharge for player and staff passcards will be assessed as follows:
 - An \$8/card surcharge for player or staff passcards that have to be issued at a Regional will be assessed to all teams
 - Teams will not be allowed to play in the National Cup until all fees and surcharges are paid.
 - US Club Soccer also reserves the right to impose a \$1000 penalty for any team that drops within three weeks of the Regional for which the team applied.
- e. See *Attachment A: Team Check-In Procedures* for more information.

6. **COMPETITION RULES.**

The following rules shall govern all Tournament competitions:

- a. All games shall be played pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game, unless stated otherwise in these rules.
- b. Length of Games:

U-11:	30 minute halves
U-12/U-13/U-14:	35 minute halves
U-15/U-16:	40 minute halves
U-17:	45 minute halves
U-18/19:	45 minute halves

All halftimes should last 10 minutes.
- c. In excessive heat conditions, water breaks can be allowed by the referee at his/her discretion, after prior consultation with the Competition Director.
- d. For all round robin games, games ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie, with each team receiving one point.
- e. Overtime (if needed): Games shall end in a tie, other than in a single-elimination game to determine a given competitive division winner or in the last game of the Finals. If an overtime period is required, it shall consist of two 10-minute halves (five minutes between halves) and then, if necessary, penalty kicks.
- f. Ball size: Size 4 for U-11 and U-12; size 5 for U-13 through U-18/19.
- g. All players must wear shin guards. All other equipment rules shall be pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game.
- h. The home team shall be listed first. In case of uniform color conflicts, the designated home team shall change uniforms.

7. **STANDINGS AND TIEBREAKERS.**

- a. Game Points: 3 points awarded for a win; 1 point for a tie; zero (0) points for a loss. A forfeit shall be recorded as a 1 – 0 win, with one goal being credited.
- b. Tiebreakers: For teams tied in points at the end of a round-robin competition, tiebreaker criteria shall be: 1) head to head competitions (but not in the case of a three-way tie); 2) goal differential (max of 3 per game); 3) total goals (max of 4 per game); 4) fewest goals allowed; and 5) penalty kicks.
 - In a case where three teams are tied in points but one team has defeated the other teams tied in points, the winner of the two games will advance.
 - In addition, once a tiebreaker is used to eliminate one team (i.e. head-to-head, goal differential, etc.), the next tiebreaker in line will be used to determine the winner or team that advances.
- c. Uneven number of games: If a tiebreaker calculation between two or more teams would be based on a different number of games, total goals and fewest goals allowed will be converted into a percentage per game.

- d. Only the Super Group and Premier winners from each age group should report to the specific award area after the completion of the team's final game.

8. GAME AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE.

- a. The referee's decision in all matters related to the field and the game itself shall be final. There shall be no protests of any referee's decision or game result. Referee Evaluation Forms (to be completed by a coach only) are available inside the team registration packet. No other forms will be provided.
- b. Red cards awarded to players or substitutes during a tournament game or dismissals of team officials shall result in that player or team official being suspended for the next tournament game. The team official shall serve his/her suspension in a game involving the same team when the dismissal occurred, unless the team has no more such games remaining. In this case, the club official shall serve the suspension on the next available game. The Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall have the authority to take further disciplinary action should it be deemed necessary.
- c. There shall be no yellow card accumulations. Note that FIFA Circulars #866 and #821 require that a sendoff for a red card or a sendoff after two yellow cards in a game be treated the same. Thus, in both cases, the player must sit out the remainder of that game and the next tournament game.
- d. Suspensions for normal red cards and staff ejections shall not extend beyond the Regional tournament or Finals.
- e. At all times, all coaches shall have complete responsibility and control for the conduct of their players, bench area, parents, family and friends.
- f. If, in the opinion of the referee, it is necessary to terminate a game due to the misconduct of a team or others associated with that team, the game shall be forfeited to the opposing team and the matter shall be referred to the Tournament Discipline Committee, which may, among other penalties, suspend the team for the remainder of the tournament. If, in the opinion of the referee, the termination is the result of substantially equivalent misconduct by both teams or by persons associated with both teams, the matter will be resolved by the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee.
- g. At the end of each game, the referee's game report shall be submitted to the Competition Director.
- h. In the event a red card is distributed, the referee shall obtain the delinquent player's/staff member's passcard and take it to the US Club Soccer headquarters tent. After the suspension is served, the coach may come pick up the passcard, unless there is the allegation of referee abuse or the Competition Director/referee feels that additional action is warranted.
- i. For serious discipline matters with the potential to incur penalties beyond the issuance of a red card or staff ejection, a Competition Incident Report and a referee's report shall be completed and sent to US Club Soccer. Also, the referee should give the delinquent players' passcards to US Club Soccer.

9. GAME START TIMES AND RE-SCHEDULING.

- a. All games shall start at the designated time. A forfeit shall be declared if a team cannot field a minimum of seven (7) players at the start time of the game. However, the Tournament Director shall have the authority to adjust the schedule in cases where a team's arrival has been delayed due to unforeseen travel or weather conditions.
- b. Every reasonable effort will be made to complete a game as long as the safety of the participants and spectators is not jeopardized. Should a game not be able to be started or should a suspension of play be required due to safety concerns or unplayable conditions, the referee, coaches, Tournament Director and Competition Director shall consult, but the referee shall have the ultimate authority to either suspend or terminate the game.
- c. If it is not possible to complete a game for the reasons set forth in this section, if the first half is completed, the results shall stand. If the first half is not completed, or if the game is tied, the Tournament Director or Competition Director shall determine whether it shall be rescheduled or another resolution of the matter shall be implemented. The schedule of remaining games shall be a factor in any determination. The teams involved shall be consulted, but the ultimate decision on such resolution shall rest with the Tournament Director and Competition Director.
- d. In all cases, the Tournament Director has the ultimate authority to adjust the schedule of any or all remaining games, including shortening the length of games, to arrive at an equitable result and in consideration of the overall integrity of the competition.

10. DISCIPLINE.

Discipline for the Tournament shall be under the jurisdiction of US Club Soccer.

ATTACHMENT A: TEAM CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

Tournament Check-In Procedures:

1. The check-in times and locations shall be determined by the Tournament Director.
2. At check-in, teams shall present the following:
 - Official team roster (up to 26 players) downloaded and printed from the team's Web site information.
 - US Club Soccer player passcards for all players on the roster.
 - Player medical treatment authorization forms.
 - Coach and manager staff passcards.
3. Player passcards shall be checked against the official roster and stamped accordingly.
4. A player may only be rostered to one team for the National Cup Regional events or the National Cup Finals.

Pre-Game Check-In Procedures:

1. Twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of each game, the coach shall present his/her team (up to 18 players) to the referee for check-in. The referee shall check player passcards against the individual players, and assure the cards have been properly stamped.
2. It is not necessary to present a copy of the team's official roster to the referee. However, the coach should have extra copies of the roster available should any questions arise.
3. Passcards shall be held by the referee or his/her designee and returned to the coach at the end of the game, except for any red cards, which shall be given to the field marshal. Red cards shall be turned in to the scorer's tent, and held until the player has sat out the required game.
4. In the case of other disciplinary matters, the player's passcard shall be held by the Competition Director until the matter is adjudicated by the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee or US Club Soccer.
5. All cards shall be returned to the coach at the end of the tournament, unless a questionable card has been confiscated by the Competition Director or his/her designee, an allegation of misconduct against a game official has been filed or in the event of violent conduct or other behavior that warrants a Competition Incident Report to be filed.