

THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW NATIONAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

2026 POLICY/RULES



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# THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW CHAMPIONSHIPS

## 2026 POLICY/RULES

### I. PART 1 -- GENERAL

#### *RULE NYSW 6101 - DEFINITIONS*

Except as otherwise provided, the following definitions apply to this policy:

- (1) **“Add”** means the addition of a player to a team’s roster who has not been previously rostered on another team.
- (2) **“Board of Directors” or “BOD”** means the Board of Directors of the New York State West Youth Soccer Association.
- (3) **“Club”** means an organization providing soccer to youth players that is a member of the New York State West Youth Soccer Association; provided however, a ‘club’ need not have the word ‘club’ as part of its official name.
- (4) **“Club Pass”** means a US Youth Soccer member pass which:
  - a. is issued to a registered youth player by a club in compliance with the rules of the New York State West Youth Soccer Association.
  - b. is issued as provided by this policy; and
  - c. specifies the club of which the youth player is a registered member.
- (5) **“Eligibility to play”** means registered and not under suspension.
- (6) **“Federation”** means the United States Soccer Federation, Inc.
- (7) **“Involuntary release”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster at the request of team authorities.
- (8) **“League”** means a structured group of 4 or more teams joined for the purpose of inter-team play under a common set of administrative and competition rules.
- (9) **“National Championship competitions”** means the competitions of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series.
- (10) **“Cup or State Cup”** means the New York State West level of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series.
- (11) **“NYSWYSA” or “NYSW”** means New York State West Youth Soccer Association.
- (12) **“ODP”** means Olympic Development Program.
- (13) **“East Region”** means USYS East Region.
- (14) **“Registration”** means the signing of forms with the intent to play the sport of soccer and paying of the fees to a member club of NYSW.
- (15) **“Rostering”** means assignment of a registered player to a team.
- (16) **“Select team”** means the official select of an all-star team of:
  - a. US Youth Soccer Association
  - b. A region
  - c. A State Association
  - d. A district or geographical subdivision of a State Association; or
  - e. Any league
- (17) **“Suspension”** means the temporary withdrawal of rights and privileges, such as the right to play, coach, or otherwise administer or participate (directly or indirectly) in soccer, and the suspension is for the entire term of the suspension with all rights and privileges withdrawn unless specifically stated otherwise by the suspending authority.
- (18) **“Team”** means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.

- (19) **“Transfer”** means the removal of a player from a team’s cup roster at the request of the player, and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the roster of another cup team. This player is referred to as ‘previously rostered.’
- (20) **“USYSA”** means the US Youth Soccer Association, Inc.
- (21) **“Voluntary release”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster at the request of the player.
- (22) **“Youth player”** means an individual who is an amateur player and who has not reached 20 years of age prior to December 31 for the current seasonal year.

## *RULE NYSW 6102 -- ESTABLISHMENT*

### Section 1. Age Groups

NYSW shall establish and shall organize an annual US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships Competition in the 12 and Under, 13 and Under, 14 and Under, 15 and Under, 16 and Under, 17 and Under, and 19 and Under age groups.

### Section 2. Genders

Both genders, boys and girls, shall have separate competitions and separate champions in each age group. This policy applies to those competitions.

### Section 3. 12 and Under Play

The competition in the 12 and Under age groups shall be small-sided games of 9v9.

## *RULE NYSW 6103 -- TITLE*

### Section 1. Event Title

The title of this NYSW event shall be: US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW CHAMPIONSHIPS.

## *RULE NYSW 6104 -- AWARDS TO TEAMS AND PLAYERS*

### Section 1. Awards at State Finals

The champion (1<sup>st</sup> place) team for each boy’s and girls’ age group at the State Finals each year shall be presented:

- (1) 1 (one) team trophy
- (2) Individual NYSW Champion medals
- (3) 1 (one) team plaque with a team picture
- (4) State Champion Patch

## *RULE NYSW 6105 – ADMINISTRATION*

### Section 1. State Chairperson

- (1) The entire administration of THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships is vested in the NYSW Board of Directors.
- (2) The NYSW BOD shall appoint a person to act as Chairperson for the entire competition.
- (3) The NYSW BOD shall determine the dates and fees of the competition by November 1 of each year.

<b>2026 State Cup Calendar</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>2026 Date</b>
Registration Opens	1-Nov
Registration Closes	2-Dec
Preliminary Rosters for Returning Final Four Teams to Demonstrate Roster Continuity Due at 6:00PM	11-Dec
Blind Draw - 6 PM ZOOM Call	16-Dec
Play Down Match-Ups Released	
Flexible Self-Scheduling Begins	17-Dec
Games can be played March 1 - May 17, 2026	
Home Team provides field for game	
Roster Freeze Deadline	7-Feb
Playdown Game Schedules due by 5:00pm	14-Feb
The schedule for all games must be provided at this time	
Any unscheduled games will be scheduled at a Date/Time/ Location determined by NYSW	
Playdown Games to Begin after	1-Mar
ODP Development Weekend	26-27 Apr
Completion Deadline for All Games	
Rain Date if needed for reschedules only	16-May
Rain Date if needed for reschedules only	17-May
Mandatory State Cup Finalist 7:30 PM Zoom Meeting	26-May
State Cup - Cortland, NY (May 30 is an SAT Test Date)	29 May - 31 May
National Championships – TBD	TBD

- (1) Entry fee is \$635.00 plus any required field rental and referee fees for preliminary playdown games.
- (2) On-line payment by credit card only – no other payments will be accepted.
- (3) Late registrations may be accepted under the following circumstances:
  - a. Teams must contact the State Cup Chair with the request to register their team after the deadline.
  - b. Teams will be accepted based on availability in the bracket that they qualify for.
  - c. Teams must pay a late application fine of \$150, for a total entry fee of \$745.00. *The late application fee may be waived in an instance where the NYSW State Cup Committee has recruited a team to fill the bracket.*
  - d. Teams will not be accepted later than 1600 EST 6 Dec 2026.
- (4) Teams who withdraw from the competition prior to the draw will forfeit their entry fee as follows:
  - a. Withdrawal 14 days or more before the draw will forfeit 50% of entry fee.
  - b. Withdrawal between 7 and 13 days before the draw will forfeit 75% of entry fee.
  - c. Withdrawal less than 7 days before the draw will forfeit 100% of entry fee.
  - d. Withdrawal after the draw but prior to scheduling of playdown matches will forfeit 100% of entry fee plus any applicable administrative and referee fees incurred at that time.
  - e. Withdrawal after playdown matches have been scheduled will forfeit 100% of entry fee plus any applicable administrative, referee and forfeit fees.

### *RULE NYSW 6106 -- PRECEDENCE OF GAMES*

THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships competitions games shall take precedence over all other youth games.

## **II. PART 2 -- ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPETITIONS**

### *RULE NYSW 7201 -- LEVELS OF COMPETITIONS*

In NYSW there shall be only 1 (one) level which shall be known as the **STATE LEVEL**. The first (1<sup>st</sup>) place team will have the right to advance to the **REGIONAL LEVEL**.

### *RULE NYSW 7202 -- NYSW FORMAT OF COMPETITION*

New York West will conduct preliminary games to determine the final four teams which will compete in a tournament known as the State Cup. The tournament places the top four teams in each age group in competition for the state championship. The Final 4 weekend will be known as the US Youth Soccer NYSW National Championship series.

THE 2026 US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Champion in each age group and in each gender shall represent New York State West at the Regional Competition. **NY West teams who qualify for the NCS National Championships through USYS league play must participate in the 2026 NYSW State Cup in order to attend. NYSWYSA will not grant waivers to compete without NYSW State Cup participation.**

Registered teams that participated in the 2025 State Cup Finals will be seeded in the order they finished, provided their current season State Cup roster total has at least a majority of the same players as the 2025 season (except 13U – which is 8 players from previous year 12U roster). The majority shall be defined by the table below. The roster used to establish the seed will be the previous year’s roster for the State Cup competition, not a roster that was modified later for Regional or National play with Club pass players.

Registered teams that are returning from the 2025 State Cup competition will need to submit their 2026 State Cup rosters in GotSport by 11 Dec 2025 for review to confirm roster continuity from the 2025 State Cup roster. This is

not the roster freeze, additional players can be added to the roster prior to the final roster freeze date. Once returning players are approved for continuity, they will not be able to be removed from the roster to drop below the roster continuity requirements. ***It is the team’s responsibility to review the roster continuity report for seeding purposes prior to the blind draw. Any seeding errors determined after the blind draw will not be corrected.***

If a team from the previous year switches clubs and or team names, the team is responsible for informing the Cup Committee of the name change. The roster of the newly named team will be compared against the roster of the previous club/team name for continuity of players. It is the continuity of the players that determines the seed, not the name of the club/team on the roster.

Examples:

2025 Cup Roster Total	2026 Player Carryover Requirement from 2025 Cup Roster
22	12
21	11
20	11
19	10
18	10
17	9
16	9
15	8
14	8

Table 1: 2026 Roster Continuity Requirements

Age Groups 2026	Birth Years
12U	2013
13U	2012
14U	2011
15U	2010
16U	2009
17U	2008
19U	2006

Table 2: Age Group Conversion Table

No entries in the 12U age group will be granted a bye into the Final 4 if play down matches are required. All entries at this age group will be required to play the play down matches to qualify. New entries in other age groups will be seeded according to a random selection during the blind draw. Once the seeding and blind draw has placed the teams in the play down brackets, they will play a **group play format** for the play down rounds to advance to the **Final 4 weekend**. The Final Four Weekend in all age groups will be conducted in a round robin format, each team playing three games with Champion declared based on points. Tie Breakers may be used if necessary to declare the Champion.

If a team advances to Nationals and becomes a National Champion and maintains roster continuity, the following season the #1 seed position will be given to that team and the State Cup Champion (providing they maintain roster continuity) will be given the #2 seed. Otherwise, the seed positions will be determined by the order of finish from the previous year Final Four, provided all roster requirements are met.

The number of playdown games required in any particular age group is determined by the number of entrants in that competition. Specifics on play down brackets can be found in Appendix A of this document.

**In all brackets - the 1<sup>st</sup> team in each pairing shall be listed first and be designated the HOME team.**

**NOTE:** Blind Draw Date- the blind draw will be held by Zoom, at 18:00, 16 Dec 2025. Team Representatives are encouraged to be present.

### *RULE NYSW 7203 -- TEAM ELIGIBILITY*

#### Section 1. Open Competition

THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships competition shall be open to any team whose players are registered with US Youth Soccer through NYSW if the team is in compliance with all of the following:

- (1) The team must be comprised of properly registered and rostered youth players (as defined by US Youth Soccer and NYSW).
- (2) The team must be in good standing with NYSW and must be in compliance with, and has not violated, any of the bylaws and policies of US Youth Soccer and NYSW.
- (3) The team must have the majority of its rostered players residing within the boundaries of NYSW. The majority shall be defined as shown in the table below.

Residency on Roster	
Roster Size	Majority
22	12
21 or 20	11
19 or 18	10
17 or 16	9
15 or 14	8
13 or 12	7

- (4) The team MUST compete in at least a 4-team **AFFILIATED** US Soccer league during the current seasonal year that meets the NYSWYSA qualifying league requirements. The league competition must consist of a minimum of one (1) game against each of the 3 different teams participating in the league. 19U age groups are excluded from this 4 - team league rule.
- (5) The team must demonstrate continuity of rosters between their League Roster and every level of the National Championship competitions by maintaining a majority of players (13U-19U) and 8 players (12U) common to the League Roster and the National Championships Roster at each level of the competition. All players on the National Championships Roster must carry a player pass for that club. No guest players are permitted at any game of this competition.

League Roster Continuity for ages 13U – 19U	
Roster Size	Majority
22	12
21 or 20	11
19 or 18	10
17 or 16	9
15 or 14	8
13 or 12	7

- (6) In order for a team to enter the 12U – 16U age group, the majority of players must be the age of the age group in which the team is participating in Cup that seasonal year.

- (7) There is not a majority age requirement for teams entering the 17U – 19U age groups.
- (8) All teams entering must have the league that they will play in during the 2025-2026 seasonal year verified by the NYSW Cup Chairperson. Failure to play in an approved league will result in disqualification from the current competition and subsequent year's competition along with the forfeit fee. The 19U age groups are exempt from any requirement to play in a league.

## Section 2. Proper Player Registration

A club may issue a club pass to any youth player who is a registered youth player of the club before the team to which such youth player is to be rostered for the New York State West level of the National Championships competitions submits its National Championships roster for its first competition at the New York State West level.

- (1) Only at the New York State West level of the National Championship competitions (but not at the Regional and National levels of the competitions):
  - a. A team may roster any player not having a club pass of that team's club if a written request, stating the reason why this action has been requested, has been made to and approved by New York State West Youth Soccer on a form provided (release and transfer); and
  - b. At the time a team's National Championships roster for competitions at the New York State West level is determined under this rule, may not have more than 5 rostered youth who were previously rostered (transferred) during the current seasonal year with a club other than the club of which the team is a member. The rostering of such youth players with such club shall be made in compliance with the rules of New York State West Youth Soccer.
  - c. A player is considered rostered to a team not later than the first game that the player participates in for the team in a competition approved by any State Association or its member leagues, clubs, and teams. NYSW is not required to consider the following as a rostered player:
    - i. A player on a school team
    - ii. A player on a recreational team
- (2) In addition to the application of the club pass provisions of the policy, a team participating in the National Championship competitions may involuntarily release a player from its roster if the player has violated bylaws, policies, or requirements of the Federation, US Youth Soccer, NYSW, another State Association, or the Club/Association that he or she is registered with.
- (3) A team may have on its team roster only players of the following age groups for the seasonal year in which the team is participating in the National Championships:
  - a. For teams competing in the 12 and Under through the 15 and Under age groups, each player on the team must be (a) of the age of the age group in which the team is participating in that seasonal year, or (b) of the age in either of the next 2 younger age groups of that age group competition in which the team is participating in that seasonal year.
  - b. For teams competing in the 16U, 17U, and 19U age groups, each player on the team must be (a) of the age of the age group competition in which the team is participating in the seasonal year, or (b) of the age of any younger age group, through the 14U age group, of that age group competition in which the team is participating in that seasonal year.

## Section 3. Team/League Rosters, NCS Rosters, and Game Rosters

Every team participating in the Championship series including the preliminary games shall have a Team/league roster, a cup roster determined under this rule based on the players on the team/league roster, and a game roster for every match or competition.

- (1) Team/League Roster - The team roster shall be the certified GotSport State League roster. The team roster shall have a minimum of 11 registered players (13U-19U) and 8 players (12U) on its roster at all times.
- (2) National Championship Roster – A team shall have a National Championship Roster based on the team/league roster at the New York State West level of the competition, approved by New York State West.

- a. 12U rosters may have up to 16 youth players.
- b. All other age groups may have up to 22 youth players on the roster at all levels of the competition.
- c. There must be a majority of players (13U-19U) and 8 players (12U) from the team (league) roster on the NCS roster at all times. (Table in Rule 7203, section 1, 5)
- d. Club passed players added to the NCS roster that do not appear on the league roster must have been club members with a pass prior to the initial roster freeze date.

(3) Game Roster

- a. All teams participating in the play down matches will present a printed copy of their National Championship **game day match card** to the competition authority prior to the match.
- b. For all matches including the Final 4, 13U and older teams, a match card shall be prepared by the team and submitted to the competition authority not later than 15 minutes prior to each scheduled game.
- c. The match card shall have a maximum of 18 players and a minimum of 7 players.
  - 1. Every player listed on the match card must be included on the NCS roster to be eligible to participate with the team.
  - 2. Players listed on the NCS roster but not on the match card for a particular match must not appear in uniform at the team bench.
  - 3. Players not on the match card and on the spectator, sideline must have his or her uniform covered.
- d. For preliminary play down games, the referees are the designated competition authority, and the match card will be submitted to the referee 15 minutes prior to the start of the match.
- e. Passes of players not on the match card will be surrendered to the competition authority for the duration of the match.

Section 4. Roster Violations that cause a Forfeit

A team shall forfeit each game of the team in which:

- (1) an unregistered player was with the team at the game in a uniform or,
- (2) a player was improperly entered on the team's roster or,
- (3) the team no longer has a recognized team official as required by Rule 7211, section 1 on the team bench.

Section 5. Roster Freeze

The team must provide its National Championships roster for the National Championship competitions as follows:

- (1) At the NYSW level, prior to the team's first National Championship competition or at a date set prior to the beginning of that age group competition in NYSW.
  - a. If a goalkeeper receives a season-ending injury with doctor documentation, a team may replace the goalkeeper to continue the competition. The replacement player must not be listed on another team within the competition.
- (2) At the National level, at the time of the team's registration for the team's age group competition at that level that shall be determined by the National Championships Committee which shall be no later than 7 days prior to the beginning of that team's age group competition at the national level.

Section 6. Roster Movement for National Levels

- (1) At the National levels of the National Championships competitions, a team of a club may have on its National Championship roster an eligible player of that club who was not on the team's National Championship roster at the prior level of the team's National Championships competition.

- (2) A player may be rostered to only one team's National Championship roster at each level of the National Championships competitions during the seasonal year.

#### Section 7. One Age Group

- (1) A team may compete in only one age group of the National Championships competitions during the seasonal year.

#### Section 8. Games other than Cup Games on the same day

A Multiple Rostered Player shall not be allowed to play for more than one (1) team per day on any day that their National Championships Team has a game.

### *RULE NYSW 7204-- TEAM OBLIGATIONS*

#### Section 1. Team play down obligations – Flexible self-scheduling.

- Playdown Game matchups will be determined following the random draw.
- Teams are responsible for working together to determine an agreed upon date/time to complete the matches.
- Home team is responsible for securing and paying for a field at the agreed date & time.
- Home team is responsible for providing the date/time/location to NYSW via GotSport **no later than 5:00 PM EST on 14 Feb 2026.**
  - If a game is submitted to GotSport on a date/time not agreed upon by both teams, the home team will be charged a fine of \$50.
- If two teams from the same club are in the same bracket, their game against each other cannot be their last playdown game.
- The Home team must furnish a game ball.
- If a date/time is not agreed upon by the specified deadline, **NYSW will schedule the game at a date, time and location to be determined** and the teams will split the cost of the field rental.
- NYSW will schedule and confirm the referee assignments for the match.
- Both teams will split the cost of the referees for the playdown match.
- If a playdown game is cancelled or postponed due to weather, it is up to the teams to agree on a reschedule date & time to be completed prior to the posted deadlines.
- If a playdown game needs to be rescheduled, not due to weather, both teams must agree to reschedule.
- If a game is cancelled/ rescheduled within 5 days of the original scheduled date, the team requesting the change will be responsible for any referee fees incurred due to late cancellation.
- Games must be played from 1 Mar 2026 – 17 May 2026.

## Section 2. Team Officials Obligations

- (1) It shall be the responsibility of each team's officials to control the actions of its players and supporters. Any team failing to control its supporters shall be asked to leave and NYSW may place additional sanctions against those officials.
- (2) There is no recruiting before, during or after any State Cup match at the assigned field of play. This includes the distribution of pamphlets, brochures, or direct recruiting or soliciting of players and/or parents not registered with your organization.

## *RULE NYSW 7205 -- FORFEITS FOR FAILURE TO COMPETE*

All playdown games must be played or the penalties for Failure to Compete will go into effect.

### Section 1. Forfeit Procedure

Any team intending to forfeit a National Championships match shall give written notice of such intention to the NYSW Cup Chairperson, not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled date of the game. Such team will be assessed a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00), forfeit their entry fee, and will be declared ineligible to enter the National Championship competition in the next seasonal year.

### Section 2. Failure to give a 14-day forfeit notice.

Any team failing to give such notice of forfeit fourteen (14) days prior to date of game, shall be assessed a fine of seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750.00), forfeit their entry fee, and will be declared ineligible to compete in the remaining National Championship competitions plus the next seasonal year National Championship competition.

### Section 3. Forfeit Fee Payment

All fines are payable to NYSWYSA prior to their next scheduled game within the National Championship Series competition or within thirty (30) days of the forfeit, whichever is sooner.

### Section 4. Forfeits and Fines at National Level Competition

Any team advancing to Nationals will be responsible for any fines given to them for failure to compete in those competitions.

## *RULE NYSW 7206 -- FORFEITS GENERALLY*

Any National Championship team proven guilty of violating this policy or of any other requirement of US Soccer, US Youth Soccer or, NYSW, shall be subject to sanctions including but not limited to, forfeiture of all games, fines, suspensions, and the preceding competition or competitions may not be replayed.

### Section 1. Forfeit during group play down matches:

Any team forfeiting a match due to not following match procedures (i.e., illegal players, not having approved coaches, etc.) will be charged a forfeit fee of \$400 plus full referee fees for the game that was forfeited. All additional group play down matches must be played or Failure to Compete penalties will apply.

If a team participating in the competition during the group play down matches forfeits a game, the scoring will be as follows:

- (1) For each forfeited game, the **NON-forfeiting team** shall be awarded.
  - a. Three (3) points for a win
  - b. Goal differential shall be equal to the average goals for game(s) in the same age group allowed by the team that forfeits.
  - c. Zero goals allowed.
- (2) For each forfeited game, the **forfeiting team** shall be awarded.
  - a. Zero points for the loss.
  - b. Zero goals for.
  - c. Four (4) goals allowed.

## *RULE NYSW 7207 -- PLAYER ELIGIBILITY*

### Section 1. General

- (1) A player must be properly registered and rostered in accordance with the rules of US Youth Soccer and NYSW. Failure to remit player registration fees before the commencement of your State Cup matches violates this requirement and can result in disqualification of your team(s).
- (2) A youth player may be on the National Championships roster of only one Team within that Club until the team has been eliminated from the National Championships Series during any seasonal year.
  - a. A youth player who is rostered to an eliminated team which participated at a National Championship Series level, and which has been issued a Club Pass of his/her Club may be rostered to another Team of his/her Club at the next level of the National Championship Series.
  - b. At the National level of competition, a team may add five players from other Club's teams which had been eliminated in a lower level of the competition.
  - c. Subject to the foregoing, and subject to the provisions of Rule 7203, Section 1 (5), at each level of the National Championship Competitions, a Team may add as many registered youth players holding Club Passes of the Club of which the Team is a member so long as the roster does not exceed 22 players.
  - d. A Team may not change Clubs at any time after the commencement of the National Championship competitions.
- (3) A player who has been suspended may play after the player's term of suspension has expired.
- (4) The first National Championships roster of a team to which the player is rostered is the only team with which the player may participate at that level of the National Championships competitions for a seasonal year.
- (5) If a player is over age, is not registered or is improperly rostered on a team's roster, that team shall forfeit all games played prior to finding such situation.

### Section 2. Registration

- (1) Local Registration - A player must register in the National State Association in which he or she resides with his or her parent(s) or guardian(s). Or in the case of a student in residence at a boarding school or university, the player may register in the National State Association in which the boarding school, college/university, or a division of the college/university is located. Any other question of residency may be determined by NYSW by means of a voter registration card, a current driver's license or from an original copy of a school transcript which shows the student's home address. All documents must be original; no photocopies will be accepted.
- (2) At the time of local registration, the player must show an acceptable proof of age. The player birth certificate must be uploaded into GotSport for review prior to the roster freeze.

### Section 3. Rostering

- (1) In accordance with NYSW policy, a player may register and play for two teams – one primary and one secondary team. The first team for which the player is issued a member pass is considered the ‘primary’ team.
- (2) In accordance with US Youth Soccer National Championships Policy, a player may participate **on only one** National Championship team during any one level of the competitions. For example, a player who rostered with and played for a youth team in Virginia, participating in that States National Championship competitions in the fall, may not participate in the National Championships competitions for a team in New York State West in the spring of that same playing year.
- (3) A player rostered to a US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Cup team may have previously ‘primary’ rostered to another club during that playing year. In that case, appropriate transfer documentation must exist. The completed NYSW Team/Player Status Form must be available. That form must contain all necessary information and required signatures and the transfer must have occurred prior to the roster freeze date.
- (4) Initial rostering shall commence no later than the player’s first (1<sup>st</sup>) participation in any competition sanctioned by a National State Association or its member leagues, clubs, or teams.
- (5) A player is not bound to a team until he/she has been issued their member pass.
- (6) Any player rostered to a National Championships team is bound to that Cup team for that level of the National Championship Series unless the player completes a transfer or is released.

### Section 4. Member Passes

- (1) To be eligible to participate in this Cup competition, each player must have an approved State issued USYS Member Pass.
- (2) The Member Pass must include a current photograph (headshot) of the player, and validation by NYSW. The pass must be laminated.
- (3) ALL information printed on the pass MUST be legible.
- (4) Player information common to the Member Pass, and Cup Roster must match exactly.

### Section 5. Rosters

- (1) League Rosters - must be an official NYSWYSA GotSport roster.
  - a. In GotSport, use the roster administration function to create your initial league roster.
  - b. To create the National Championships roster, in GotSport use the roster administration function to place an existing team into a league. Place the team’s existing league roster created in step a into the appropriate State Cup event.
  - c. Add or remove players from the Cup League roster following the proper procedures of club passed players and maintaining the required number of common players to the league roster that was cloned to become the Cup roster.
- (2) National Championship Rosters – must be an official NYSWYSA GotSport certified roster. All rosters must contain at least 11 players (13U-19U) and 8 players (12U) players in common with the League Roster. **All players MUST have a jersey number listed on the roster.** Zero ‘0’ is an acceptable jersey number.
- (3) All players, coaches and team officials must be listed on the National Championships Roster. All required information must be included and correct.

### Section 6. Medical Release Form

All players MUST have a current Medical Release Form at all games. These must be uploaded to GotSport prior to Final Four registration. No player will be allowed to participate without this form. Players 18 years of age and older are not required to show a medical release form.

## *RULE NYSW 7208 -- LEAGUES*

### Section 1. Approved Leagues

- (1) All teams must compete in at least a four team - **AFFILIATED US Soccer** league during the current seasonal year. The 19U age group is exempt from any league play requirement. Questions about which leagues are considered Cup approved should be directed to NYSW.
- (2) The league competition must consist of a minimum of one game against each of three (3) different teams participating in the league.
- (3) The league must play on appropriately sized fields and 11 v 11 (9 v 9 for the 12U age group).
- (4) For 19U, and 17U age groups, participation in an adult or amateur league may qualify the team with prior approval from NYSW.

### Section 2. Approved League Structure

- (1) All leagues must have the following:
  - a. Bylaws
  - b. Officers/Board of Directors
  - c. Rules
  - d. Schedules
  - e. All leagues **MUST** be a member or associate member of NYSW, another National State Association or US Soccer.

### Section 3. Approved League Team Composition

- (1) In order for a league to be approved, it must meet the following criteria:
  - a. At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total entries must be from different clubs.
  - b. An age group must have at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the entries from at least two clubs.
  - c. A team can play up only one (1), or two (2) year age group except for 16U. Example: 14U can play 16U, but not 17U or above.
  - d. The games must be full-length games as per FIFA times.
  - e. Must play at least a three-week schedule. No one (1) weekend leagues allowed.
  - f. All games played must have certified USSF Referees. They **MUST** be assigned by a USSF Certified Referee Assignor. Three-man referee crews are strongly preferred.
  - g. All players on the roster must have a US Soccer member pass.
  - h. The referee will allow only players with a US Soccer member pass to participate in the game. Players who only appear on the roster but do not show a pass will not be permitted to play.
  - i. A report recapping all games, standings, red cards, and winners must be sent to the NYSW State office at the conclusion of the league.

### Section 4. Approved League Sanctioning

Only sanctioned US Soccer leagues will be considered for qualifying leagues. The NYSWYSA Cup Chairperson has the right to reject any team not playing in an approved league.

## *RULE NYSW 7209 -- TEAM AND PLAYER BREACHES OF RULES*

### Section 1. NYSW Oversight

It is the responsibility of the NYSW Cup Chairperson to investigate a properly protested violation immediately following its receipt. Failure to cooperate with that investigation shall result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

### Section 2. Result of Violations

Any team found guilty of using an ineligible player is not eligible to compete further in the National Championships competition in the current seasonal year. Any coach, manager or official found guilty of knowingly using an ineligible player is not eligible to compete further in the National Championship competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year. A player found guilty of submitting falsified birth information is prohibited from competing further in National Championship competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year.

### Section 3. Red Cards and Send Off's

A player, coach or team official who is sent off from any National Championship competitions is prohibited from participating in the next National Championships match for which they are scheduled to participate. A player, coach or team official may receive more than a one-game suspension to be determined by the Cup Committee. Red cards stay within the competition in which they are issued. This means that for red cards that are not issued during a National Championships match (such as cards issued during league play or tournament play), the player shall not serve the associated suspension in National Championship match play (either during a play down match or a semi-final match).

A player that has been sent off during a match must leave the field of play and MUST be supervised by either a risk management approved team official or a State Representative and must remain with them until the completion of the match. A USSF Supplemental Referee Report with details of the incident along with the player pass shall be turned over to the State Cup Committee by the Referee Committee. Players that remain with their approved team official in the game/bench area must remove their player jersey. If the sent off player continues to be disruptive or a distraction to anyone in the bench area, they will be escorted from the area to the Tournament Headquarters and the suspension may be increased by the State Cup Tournament Committee upon review of the incident. The State Cup Tournament Committee has the right to modify and change the player sendoff policy/rule at any time during the State Cup competition.

If the resulting suspension is to be served at the current State Cup competition, then the player may sit on the team bench providing he/she is dressed in street clothes.

A coach or team official who is sent off from any National Championship competition must serve any suspension in the same role and with the same team in which the sendoff occurred, i.e., a person cannot fulfill a suspension received as a coach for one team as an assistant coach or another team staff position on another team.

Any ADULT team official sitting out a game, or who is sent off from a game, cannot be within sight and sound of the remainder of the game or the game they are sitting out. In addition, the adult sitting out shall not have any communication, electronic or otherwise, with anyone present while the game is in progress. If the Cup Committee is informed and after investigation finds that a coach or team official was in sight of or in any way involved with the game, severe disciplinary action will be taken.

## Section 4. Misconduct

Players, coaches, and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in this policy, including cautions, ejections, and standard suspension. Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a team, such as relatives & spectators, are also subject to the jurisdiction & authority of NYSWYSA. Any coach or team official shall be held responsible for the actions of any individual at any game that, in the opinion of the referee, is a supporter of that team.

## *RULE NYSW 7210 -- PROTESTS AND APPEALS*

A plea of ignorance to the rules and regulations of the US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships Competitions, are not sufficient grounds for a protest or appeal. Violators may expect appropriate action by NYSW. Any Player, Coach, or Team Official, who has been suspended from the US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships Competitions due to disciplinary action by the Cup Committee, may appeal the decision to NYSW.

### Section 1. Appeals

Anyone filing an appeal must conform to the NYSW Adjudication Manual.

### Section 2. Protests

All questions relating to the qualifications of the competitors or interpretation of the rules, or any dispute or protest, shall be referred to the NYSW Cup Chairperson.

For game protests, the NYSW Cup Chairperson shall compile the necessary information, to hear the protest, from all available sources before the protest is heard. This shall include, if possible, coaches, field marshals, referees, assessors, available witnesses, if necessary, etc. At the Final's tournament, all coaches or their designated representatives MUST remain at the game site until the protest is decided.

After completion of compiling the necessary information, the NYSW Cup Chairperson will meet with the Protest Committee, of which there must be four (4) members present, to conduct the protest meeting. The four (4) members of the protest committee shall be appointed by the NYSW Cup Chairperson. No member of the protest committee shall be from the District of any of the teams involved in the protest. The NYSW Cup Chairperson will only vote in case of a tie. The decision of the Committee shall be binding. The NYSW Cup Chairperson shall notify both coaches of the Committee's decision. If the protest is upheld and the game must be replayed, it will be up to the NYSW Cup Chairperson to schedule the game as he/she sees fit.

### **The following rules apply to all protests:**

- (1) The protest must be verbally lodged with the referee AND the opposing coach at the game site before entering the field of play or leaving the game site except as noted in #4 below.
- (2) The protest must be filed with the NYSW Cup Chairperson with the following:
  - a. Fee in the amount of \$750.00. This fee may be in cash, cashier's check, or money order. All checks and money orders must be made payable to NYSW. No protest fees will be returned for any reason.
  - b. The protest must be submitted in writing with a minimum of five (5) copies and must include full particulars of the grounds on which the protest is lodged.
  - c. Any information to be presented by witnesses must be in writing.
- (3) The NYSW Cup Chairman MUST receive the protest within one (1) hour of the completion of the game being protested.
- (4) Any protest relating to the fields, goalposts, bars or other appurtenances of the game shall not be entertained if the NYSW Cup Chairman and the Referee Administrator have approved them.

- (5) The NYSW Cup Chairperson shall immediately upon the receipt of a protest, notify the team against which the protest is made and shall give a copy of the protest and all particulars to that team, which will then have the right to defend its case, with or without witnesses.
- (6) A lawyer shall not represent a team at the hearing of any protest unless the lawyer is listed on the team's roster as a coach, assistant coach, or other team official.
- (7) Judgment decisions of the Referee are not subject to protest.

## *RULE NYSW 7211 -- GAME PLAY*

### Section 1. Passes, Rosters, Uniforms and Score Cards

- (1) At all Cup Games, players and all team officials must have a current State certified Member Pass.
- (2) At all Cup Games, the team must have a National Championship match card. The team's National Championship match card and member passes must be available at the game site at all times. Electronic match cards and member passes will not be accepted.
- (3) Each player must have a number on the player's jersey. The number must be affixed to the back of the jersey and must be clearly visible. Each player on the team must wear a number different from the number of every other player on the team. Goalkeepers must also have a number on their jersey. Zero '0' is an acceptable jersey number.
- (4) The home team wears dark colors. If the two team's colors are similar and cause a conflict, as determined by the referee, the home team will need to change.
- (5) Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from other players and game officials.
- (6) At every level of the National Championships competitions, a player or team official at a game site to participate in a game or other associated activities of the competitions may only have on the outer wear of the player or team official a name, logo, or other identifying mark of a youth soccer organization of US Youth Soccer, NYSWYSA, or other member of US Youth Soccer, or a member of NYSWYSA. A name, logo, or other identifying mark of any other youth soccer organization must be removed, replaced, or covered before the player or team official may continue to remain at the game site for the game.
- (7) At all Final 4 Games, both teams must return their score card to the tournament headquarters or field marshal. Failure to return the card will result in a \$25.00 fine during the semi-finals day of competition and will result in a \$50.00 fine on the final day of the competition.

### Section 2. Playing Rules

The playing rules of THE US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championships Competitions shall conform to the FIFA "**Laws of the Game**" except as provided by this rule.

Field sizes must conform to Standards of Play as detailed in US Soccer's Player Development Initiatives August 2017 and US Youth Soccer Guidelines. Sizes apply to both outdoor and indoor fields.

9v9 – Field of Play -70-80 yards (length) -45-55 yards (width) -Goals should be no larger than 7 feet (height) x 21 feet (width) -A 6.5 feet (height) x 18.5 feet (width) goal is recommended based on the age and ability of the players.

11v11– Field of Play -100-130 yards (length) -50-100 yards (width) -Goals should be no larger than 8 feet (height) x 24 feet (width)

Turf fields shall be utilized where possible. It is the home team's responsibility to review the field quality & weather conditions in advance of the match and secure a back-up field location if needed.

Except as otherwise provided for in this section, the length of games, overtime play periods, ball size, ball circumference, and ball weight for each age group shall be as follows:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Game Length</u>	<u>Overtime Play</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Circumference</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Max Roster Size</u>
19 & Under	Two 45' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
17 & Under	Two 45' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
16 & Under	Two 40' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
15 & Under	Two 40' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
14 & Under	Two 35' halves	Two 10' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
13 & Under	Two 35' halves	Two 10' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 oz.	22 players
12 & Under	Two 30' halves	Two 10' periods	#4	25-26 in.	11-13 oz.	16 players

Any dispute shall be referred to the NYSW Cup Chairperson.

#### **OVERTIME PLAY**

For all games:

- (1) Play down games are all “group format” games: Games tied at the end of regulation time, will remain a tie and be scored as such.
  - a. If a game is tied at the end of regulation time, FIFA “Kicks from the Penalty Mark” should be taken to determine who advances to Final Four in the case of a tie in the standings.
- (2) Semi-Final/ Final are all “single elimination format” games:  
All matches that are tied at the end of regulation play will be decided by playing two overtime periods as called out in the table above. If a game has overtime play and is still tied after the end of overtime play, FIFA “**Kicks from the Penalty Mark**” rules will apply in order to determine who advances.

#### **SUBSTITUTIONS**

For the National Championships competitions at the State Cup level:

- (1) for the 12 & Under, 13 & Under and 14 & Under age groups, unlimited substitutions shall be allowed; and
- (2) for all other age groups, a maximum of 7 substitutions for each team shall be allowed in each game during each half of play and during overtime play. After leaving the game during a half of play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game during that same half of play. After leaving the game during overtime play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game.

#### **GRACE PERIOD**

A fifteen (15) minute grace period shall be allowed at the start of the game. For all preliminary/playoff round match games, any team not ready to play after the grace period must be reported by the referee to the NYSW Cup Chairperson within 24 hours for appropriate action.

### **UNFINISHED GAMES**

Unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed providing neither team is at fault and play has not begun in the second half of regulation time. If play is stopped during the second half of regulation time and cannot be resumed, and neither team is at fault, the game will be declared finished and complete. If a match is stopped during the second half of regulation time and cannot be resumed, and the match is tied when it is stopped, the match will be decided by Kicks from the Mark. Should play be stopped at any time due to one (1) of the teams being adjudged at fault, whether the game is to be replayed or declared a forfeit shall be at the discretion of the NYSW Cup Chairperson and 2 other members of the NYSW Board of Directors.

### **SCORING SYSTEM**

WIN	Three (3) Points
TIE	One (1) Point
LOSS	Zero (0) Points

### **TIE BREAKERS**

Used to determine advancement to or seeding in Final Four when tied following the group play down games.

- (1) Head-to-Head
- (2) Goal Difference (maximum goal difference will be four (4) per game)
- (3) Least Goals Allowed

If teams are tied following the above tie breakers, the following will be used to determine Final Four.

- (1) If all tied teams are advancing to Final Four, a Coin Toss will be used to determine Final Four seeding. The coin toss will be held on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- (2) If tied teams are from the same bracket (already played each other) and we are determining which team is advancing to Final Four, FIFA “Kicks from the Penalty Mark” taken during group play will be used to break the tie.
- (3) If determining advancement to Final Four for teams from different brackets, a game will be played immediately following the playdown round at a time and place determined by the State Cup Committee.

### **Three-way ties within an age group:**

A three-way tie will be decided using the same tie breakers as items 2 and 3 above. If only one team can be eliminated before applying item 4, then start over at 1 comparing only the remaining two teams. If FIFA “**Kicks from the Penalty Mark**” have to be taken, there will be a draw by the State Cup 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 “**Kicks from the Penalty Mark**”. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in FIFA “**Kicks from the Penalty Mark**” to determine the winner of the age group. The bye team will be the home team.

### **FORFEITS**

A team forfeiting a game during Final 4 Weekend will automatically be out of the competition.

## *RULE NYSW 7212 -- GAME OFFICIALS*

### Section 1. USSF Registered Referees

For any and all US YOUTH SOCCER NYSW Championship Cup Games, the game officials must be registered and assigned by the Western NY Referees Association.

### Section 2. Referee Match Fees

The fees for game officials shall be consistent with the current contract between NYSW and the Western NY Referees Association.

### Section 3. Referee Match Fees for Play down Games

For all games played by teams to qualify for the Final 4 Weekend, game fees shall be paid to the referees on the fields by the teams playing the game.

### Section 4. Referee Match Fees for Final 4 Weekend

All games played at the Final 4 Weekend, game fees shall be paid to the referee's by NYSW, not the teams.

### Section 5. Referee Authority

The referee shall have the power to decide the fitness of the field in all games. In other respects, the duties of the referee and assistant referee are as defined in the "FIFA Laws of the Game."

If a field is determined as unsafe by the referees, not due to acts of god such as weather conditions, the referees shall be paid in full by the home team. If an alternate field is not available for the originally scheduled date & time within 10 miles of the confirmed location, the home team will forfeit the opportunity to host the game and the game will be moved to a location to be supplied by the away team on an alternate date & time to be agreed upon by both teams.

### Section 6. Failure of Referee to Appear

In the event the assigned referee fails to appear and when assistant referees have been appointed, one of the assistant referees shall take charge. When assistant referees have not been appointed and the referee fails to put in an appearance, the coaches or managers of the home team need to contact the Cup Chairperson as soon as possible. The game may be conducted if other USSF certified referees can be located. Only games using a 3-man referee system will count. Any game conducted without USSF certified referees will not be counted in the Cup standings.

### Section 7. Violent Conduct during a Match

The referee has the power during the game to deal with players guilty of violent conduct or using threatening or abusive language. The referee shall forward the name of any offender within 2 days thereafter to the NYSW Cup Chairperson. No player shall leave the field of play without the consent of the referee.

## *RULE NYSW 7213 – TEAM AND PLAYER REGISTRATION AT FINAL 4 WEEKEND*

### Section 1. Team Must Register

All teams playing in the Final 4 Weekend must register their team at least 1 hour prior to their first (1st) game. Teams should consider registering early as the registration area can be very busy at times.

A team official must be present to check-in.

The team's Certified NYSW National Championship Series Roster should be on file at the headquarters/check-in table.

### Section 2. Documents to Present at Registration

At registration, the team official must have the following:

- (1) Member (Players) Passes for all players, coaches, and team officials. **All passes MUST be laminated.**
- (2) Medical Release Forms for all players must be uploaded to GotSport no later than Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Players who live out of state have their paperwork provided to the state office electronically by the other state. Paperwork is not required to be shown at Final 4 registration. Code of Conduct and Commitment forms are provided to each team by the Cup Committee on NYSW website for completing, signing and presentation at the Final 4 registration.

### Section 3. Housing at State Cup Final 4

The NYSW National Championships provides housing at the best possible prices for teams at Final 4. Hotel reservations are not required and are at the team's discretion, however any teams/ families who are interested in reserving a room must do so through the NYSW approved agency. Once a team commits to using the housing provided by securing a room block/reservation for their team, they will be levied a \$750.00 penalty for not using at least 50% of the rooms reserved. Going outside the provided housing system will also result in a \$750.00 penalty.

## *RULE NYSW 7214 -- MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR*

The NYSW Board of Directors shall determine all matters not provided for in these rules provided that the matter is not covered by the National Championship Rules and decisions so made shall be final and binding.

Released for 2003 as Ver.5, 31 Jan. 2003

Released for 2004 as Ver. 1, 1 Jan 2004

Released for 2005 as Ver. 1, 27 Jan 2005

Released for 2006 as Ver. 1, 06 Feb 2006

Revised to include U12 play, Ver.2, 19 February 2006

Released for 2007 as Ver. 1, 16 Jan 2007

Released for 2008 as Ver. 3, 12 Feb 2008

Released for 2009 as Ver. 1, 27 Jan 2009

Released for 2010 as Ver. 4, 18 Jan. 2010

Reformatted for 2011 and released 3 Feb 2011

Revised to meet new national changes, 16 Sept 2011

Revised to meet 19 Nov 2011 Amendments to the NCS rule, 6 Dec 2011

Released for 2012 Ver. 1, 22 Dec 2011

Released for 2012 Ver. 2, 9 January 2012

Released for 2013 Ver. 1, 11 January 2013

Released for 2013 Ver. 1.1, 22 January 2013

Updated to 2013 Ver. 1.2 Rule 7211, Section 2 on substitution to match national rules, 25 Feb 2013

Updated to 2014 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping of dates for 2014.

Updated to 2015 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping of dates for 2015.

Updated to 2015 Ver. 2 – cleaned up language in rule 7203 #6 for clarity.

Updated to 2016 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping of dates for 2016.

Updated to 2017 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2017 rule, age matrix, and language changes.

Updated to 2017 Ver. 2 – additional housekeeping and compliance with 2017 rule changes.

Updated to 2018 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2018 dates, language changes, and rule changes.

Updated to 2018 Ver. 2 – entry fee and reimbursements schedule; Final Four 51% continuity requirement for seeding restored to team players as opposed to club players.

Updated to 2019 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2019 dates, language changes, and rule changes.

Updated to 2020 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2020 dates, language changes, and rule changes.

Updated to 2021 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2021 dates, format changes from Final 4 to Semi-Finals and Finals, language changes, and rule changes.

Updated to 2022 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2022 dates, format changes for self-scheduling playdown games and return to Final 4 from Semi-Finals and Finals, language changes, and rule changes.

Updated to 2023 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2023 dates, language changes and rule changes. The main changes are Three-Way Tie Breakers, Qualifying Leagues, Team/Player Eligibility, Field Sizes and Final Four Housing.

Updated to 2024 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2024 dates, language changes and rule changes. The main changes are format to group play in the playdown rounds Final 4 to Semi-Finals and Finals.

Updated to 2025 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2025 dates

Updated to 2026 Ver. 1 – general housekeeping to 2026 dates

## Appendix A

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Play Down Brackets – the number of playdown matches is determined by the number of entrants in a particular age group competition. See the specific examples by going to this [link](#).