

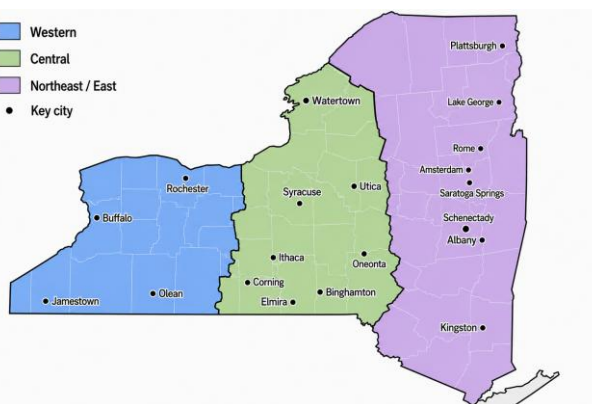
EXCELSIOR LEAGUE

EVER UPWARD

POLICIES, PROCEDURES & RULES

Competition and operating manual

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Owner / Operator	New York State West Youth Soccer Association
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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Item	Current version
Owner	NYSWYSA
Applies to	All EXL clubs, teams, officials, players, coaches, and spectators
Season	Published annually through the Annual Competition Notice
Supersedes	Version 2.0
Related documents	EXL Charter; NYSWYSA policies; applicable US Youth Soccer and US Soccer rules; U.S. Soccer Referee Abuse Prevention Policy

1. SCOPE AND ORDER OF AUTHORITY

These Policies, Procedures & Rules govern EXL membership, registration, competition, scheduling, match operations, promotion and relegation, discipline, safety, financial obligations, and appeals. If a conflict exists, the following order applies: applicable law; US Soccer; US Youth Soccer; NYSWYSA; EXL Charter; this manual; the Annual Competition Notice; administrative instructions.

EXL is an approved NYSWYSA State Cup qualifying league. For an otherwise eligible NYSWYSA-registered team, participation in EXL may satisfy the qualifying-league component of NYSWYSA State Cup eligibility. Participation in EXL does not, by itself, guarantee State Cup acceptance or eligibility. Each team remains responsible for satisfying all applicable State Cup registration, roster continuity, residency, age-group, deadline, and competition requirements.

2. LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Official communications shall be made through league-designated email addresses and GotSport accounts.
- Each club shall designate a club administrator, registrar, field coordinator, finance contact, and emergency contact.
- A club is responsible for maintaining current contact information and distributing league communications internally.
- Only authorized club or team officials may submit schedule, roster, protest, appeal, or disciplinary materials.

3. CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND CERTIFICATION

- Good standing requires current State Association affiliation and no delinquent EXL obligations.
- Each club must provide leadership contacts, evidence of applicable risk management, coaching education, venue certification, financial security, and annual policy acceptance.
- A new club may be placed on one-year affiliate probation. Failure to complete certification may delay acceptance, restrict hosting, or result in suspension.
- EXL permits applications from clubs affiliated with another state association. An individual team shall apply through its affiliated club, and acceptance of a team does not create a membership interest separate from that of its affiliated club.
- Before participation, an outside-state-association club must provide evidence of current affiliation and all permissions or approvals required by its Home State Association, NYSWYSA, US Youth Soccer, or another applicable governing body.
- Home State Association means the state association with which the participating club or team is registered or affiliated. Field-Jurisdiction Association means the state association, if any, having geographic jurisdiction over the proposed Home field.
- A club or team affiliated with another state association remains subject to the registration, roster, residency, qualifying-league, competition, and approval requirements of its Home State Association. Acceptance into EXL does not establish or guarantee eligibility for that association's State Cup or championship series. The participating club is responsible for determining whether its Home State Association recognizes EXL participation for any qualifying purpose and may not represent EXL or NYSWYSA acceptance as approval by another state association.

4. TEAM APPLICATION, ACCEPTANCE, AND PLACEMENT

- Applications must be complete and paid by the published deadline.
- Acceptance is not automatic and depends on club good standing, suitable competition, roster viability, coach compliance, field capacity, geography, and available division space.
- Existing teams are placed using prior EXL results, promotion and relegation outcomes, and team continuity.
- New teams ordinarily enter the lowest available tier unless granted a competitive placement waiver.
- Placement decisions shall be published before scheduling. A placement review request must be filed by the published deadline and does not guarantee a change.

5. AGE GROUPS, FORMATS, AND ROSTERS

EXL age groups shall be determined in accordance with the age matrix adopted by NYSWYSA for the applicable seasonal year. The controlling age matrix shall be identified in the Annual Competition Notice and shall remain in effect for that EXL season unless a change is required by NYSWYSA or another superior governing authority.

Age	Format	Max roster	Max game-day roster	Minimum coach standard
10U	7v7	14	14	Applicable grassroots pathway
11U/12U	9v9	18	16	9v9 grassroots or higher
13U/14U	11v11	22	18	11v11 grassroots; D license pathway
15U/16U	11v11	22	18	D license pathway; D license or approved equivalent
17U-19U	11v11	22	18	D license pathway; D license or approved equivalent

6. PLAYER AND TEAM OFFICIAL ELIGIBILITY

- Players and team officials must be properly registered, rostered, and eligible under the governing registration system.
- A player may appear for only one EXL team in the same age group unless the League publishes a specific exception.
- No handwritten addition is valid unless expressly authorized in writing.
- Use of an ineligible participant may result in forfeiture, fines, suspension, or other sanctions.
- At least one properly credentialed adult team official must remain with each team.

7. CLUB PASS PLAYERS

- Premier: maximum three per match; Championship: four; First Division: five.
- Club-pass players must be registered to the same club and satisfy age, registration, and eligibility requirements.
- A club-pass player may play only upward in age unless the League approves a documented exception.
- The player must appear on the approved game-day roster before kickoff.
- The Annual Competition Notice may establish appearance limits and submission lead times.
- Use of an ineligible club-pass player is treated as use of an ineligible player.

8. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

EXL uses Premier, Championship, and First Division tiers where participation supports all three. Geographic conferences or subdivisions may be used to control travel. The Annual Competition Notice shall identify each age group's divisions, schedule format, crossover matches, Festival obligations, postseason qualification, and promotion/relegation positions.

9. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- Automatic movement is the default when divisions are viable and comparable.
- Premier: bottom two are relegated; the third-from-bottom team may defend its place when a challenge is published.
- Championship: top two are promoted and bottom two relegated; third place may challenge for Premier.
- First Division: top two are promoted; third place may challenge for Championship.
- A playoff shall be used only when published before the season in the Annual Competition Notice.
- A team may move no more than one tier in a seasonal year.
- Promotion requires club and team good standing, facility compliance, coaching compliance, and demonstrated ability to field the team.
- Promotion and relegation attach to a club team slot only when reasonable roster and coaching continuity exists.
- Standings tiebreakers are head-to-head points when balanced and applicable; capped goal differential; fewest goals allowed; most wins; fair-play record; and a League-administered draw or playoff.

10. SCHEDULING

- The League develops matchups; teams self-schedule during the published window.
- The Home team leads scheduling and enters agreed details in GotSport.
- If teams do not agree by the deadline, the League may assign a binding date and time.
- Teams should play no more than one league match per day unless authorized for long-distance travel.
- Changes after schedule finalization require appropriate communication and compliance with the published process.
- All matches must be completed by the season deadline unless written relief is granted.

11. RESCHEDULING, WEATHER, AND UNFINISHED MATCHES

- Requested changes require documented coordination, League notice, and timely replacement details.
- Weather closures require venue documentation and prompt notice to the League, opponent, and officials.
- A match unfinished before halftime is ordinarily replayed unless a team is at fault.
- A result after halftime may stand if neither team is at fault.
- The League determines replay, result, forfeit, costs, and sanctions.

12. FIELD AND VENUE STANDARDS

- The Home club provides a safe, properly sized, lined, equipped, and permitted field.
- Goals must be anchored; technical and spectator areas separated; emergency access unobstructed.
- Each venue submission identifies parking, restrooms where applicable, emergency access, AED location, and field coordinator.
- The Home club maintains a primary and reasonable backup-field plan.
- A team may use an approved Home field outside the geographic territory of NYSWYSA. Before scheduling, the participating club must obtain any approval required by the Field-Jurisdiction Association or other governing body and complete EXL venue certification.
- Approval of an out-of-territory Home field does not relieve the club of responsibility for field authorization, insurance, emergency planning, AED information, referee-assignment coordination, local requirements, or EXL standards.
- The referee may declare a field unsafe or unplayable.

13. VENUE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY ACTION

- Each club maintains a written Emergency Action Plan for every Home venue.
- The plan identifies address, emergency access, AED location, contacts, severe-weather shelter, and emergency-service activation.
- Applicable concussion, safeguarding, heat, lightning, and return-to-play requirements apply.
- A responsible team adult knows the venue plan before kickoff.

14. GAME-DAY PROCEDURES

- Each team presents the League-approved roster or match card before kickoff.
- Coaches and team officials possess required credentials.
- No participant may participate unless properly rostered and eligible.
- The Home team provides documentation, score-reporting materials, and game ball.
- If uniform colors conflict, the Home team changes.
- Match lengths, ball specifications, roster standards, and age-specific playing rules remain as published in the Annual Competition Notice and applicable governing requirements.

15. SCORING AND STANDINGS

- Scores must be reported within forty-eight hours.
- Win: 3 points; draw: 1; loss: 0; forfeit win: 3 points and 3-0 score; double forfeit: 0 points to each and 0-3 recorded against each.
- Standings are official only after League review.
- EXL may withhold standings for developmental age groups if required by controlling policy.

16. EXL SOCCER FESTIVAL AND POSTSEASON

- The League may require participation in a mid-season EXL Soccer Festival.
- The Annual Competition Notice identifies whether Festival matches count in standings.
- The EXL Final Four or other postseason format is published before the season.
- A team must be in good standing and satisfy match-completion requirements.

17. REFEREES

- Matches use currently certified officials assigned through an authorized assignor.
- Teams pay referee fees as published.
- If fewer officials appear than expected, teams follow the annual referee procedure.
- No match counts as official without the authorized minimum referee standard.
- Alleged referee abuse or assault must be reported immediately.

18. REFEREE AND GAME SCHEDULE FEES

Referee, cancellation, reschedule, in-season scheduling, and abandoned-match fees are team-paid costs and are published annually in or incorporated by reference into the Annual Competition Notice.

19. CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE, AND REFEREE PROTECTION

- EXL adopts the NYSWYSA Zero Tolerance Policy and incorporates U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9, Referee Abuse Prevention Policy.
- U.S. Soccer minimum sanctions control where applicable; EXL may impose additional authorized sanctions.
- Four cautions in EXL play produce a one-match suspension; each additional two cautions produce another one-match suspension.
- A player send-off carries an automatic minimum one-completed-match EXL suspension.
- A dismissed coach or team official receives a minimum two-completed-match EXL suspension.
- A removed spectator is automatically barred from the next EXL match involving that team pending review.
- The League provides notice, an opportunity to respond, and a written decision when additional discipline is imposed.
- Failure to serve a suspension, or use of a suspended person, results in forfeiture review and additional sanctions.

20. FEES, FINES, AND BOND

Item	Amount / treatment
Team entry fee	Established annually by NYSWYSA and published in the annual fee schedule
Club membership bond	\$450 per club; replenish after any draw
Player registration fee	None charged by EXL
GotSport / technology	\$0 incremental EXL cost
Insurance and risk management	\$0 incremental EXL cost; required clearances remain
Referee and game schedule fees	Published annually
Other fines and fees	Published annually

The annual fee schedule may be incorporated into the Annual Competition Notice. The \$0 insurance and risk-management cost assumption does not waive registration, screening, safeguarding, education, or clearance requirements. All estimates remain subject to annual budget approval.

21. CLUB COMPLIANCE SCORECARD

- The scorecard may address financial, scheduling, coaching and registration, safety and venue, conduct, administration, and sportsmanship performance.
- Significant noncompliance may affect hosting or postseason eligibility.
- Promotion shall not be withheld for minor administrative issues corrected promptly; material unresolved compliance failures may make a team ineligible.

22. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

- A protest challenges a misapplication or misinterpretation of a published rule, policy, eligibility or roster requirement, or competition procedure.
- A protest may not challenge a referee judgment decision.
- Only a properly credentialed club or team official may submit a protest.
- Regular-season protests must be filed within forty-eight hours; Final Four or postseason protests within one hour.
- The submission must identify the matter, rule, facts, requested remedy, evidence, and published fee.
- Regular-season protests are reviewed by the Competition Committee or another NYSWYSA-designated body; postseason protests by the Competition Committee or Tournament Protest Committee.
- Written decisions identify the issue, findings, applicable rules, decision, and sanctions or remedies.
- Appeals must be timely, written, supported, and accompanied by any required fee.

23. RECORDS, PRIVACY, AND MATCH MEDIA

- League and club officials protect participant information and use it only for authorized soccer administration.
- Match video may be used for team, education, safety, or disciplinary purposes consistent with safeguarding and notice requirements.
- Official records include approved rosters, match reports, standings, disciplinary decisions, and financial records.

24. ANNUAL PUBLICATIONS

Before each season, EXL shall publish the Annual Competition Notice, calendar, team alignment, schedule windows, roster deadlines, game formats, referee fees, fines, promotion/relegation positions, playoff procedures, Festival and postseason requirements, and contacts. The Annual Competition Notice shall include or incorporate by reference the annual fee schedule approved by NYSWYSA. The Annual Competition Notice may update operational details but may not contradict the Charter.

APPENDIX A | PRESEASON CLUB CHECKLIST

- Club bond funded.
- Team applications and fees complete.
- Club and team contacts current.
- Coaches and adults compliant.
- Rosters submitted.
- Primary and backup fields certified.
- Emergency Action Plans and AED locations documented.
- Schedules completed.
- Policies acknowledged.

APPENDIX B | GAME-DAY CHECKLIST

- Field and goals safe.
- Emergency access and AED location known.
- Approved roster or match card available.
- Player and staff credentials available.
- Opponent and referee crew confirmed.
- Technical and spectator areas established.
- Score and incidents reported after the match.