



2024 - 2025

COMPETITION PROTOCOLS



**US YOUTH
SOCCER**



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PROTOCOL 501 SCOPE

This document contains important information regarding the competition protocols utilized at the US Youth Soccer Regional and National Presidents Cup competitions. All participating State Associations, clubs and teams are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the information contained within this document, paying close attention to all deadlines. There are specific and critical responsibilities assigned, and ignorance or failure to comply with those responsibilities may result in unintended consequences.

Each State Association may enter one (1) male and one (1) female team in the 13U, 14U, 15U, 16U, 17U and 18U and 19U age groups. Competitions may be organized for qualifying players in the 12U age group for both boys and girls as defined by Rule 104 of the US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules and will conclude at the Regional Presidents Cup level.

PROTOCOL 502 GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Teams and players competing in the US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup competitions are representatives of their State Association and/or Region. The primary expectation is sportsmanlike behavior and respect towards opponents, coaches, referees, competition staff and volunteers. Players should also understand how to behave in a pregame walkout, how to win with humility and lose with dignity.

The Presidents Cup Management Group and the Event Management Team at each competition expects exemplary behavior from all participants, including but not limited to, players, coaches, parents, spectators and referees.

PROTOCOL 503 COMPETITION ENTRY FEES

Each year, the entry fee for each level of the National Presidents Cup competitions will be determined as part of the US Youth Soccer budget process. This entry fee will be invoiced to State Associations and must be remitted directly to US Youth Soccer after all state entries and wildcards have been determined, but prior to the start of the competitions.

PROTOCOL 504 MEMBER PASSES

All rostered players and team officials must possess a printed, current and valid US Youth Soccer member pass with a recent face on, passport style photograph. Member passes will be verified against the official roster before the start of the competition. At each match, member passes must be provided to the referee. If unusual or extenuating circumstances exist, and in order to ensure the orderly progression of the competition, electronic member passes may be utilized if approved by the Presidents Cup Management Group, the Event Management Team or a designee. Printed member passes must be provided as soon as practical.

Member passes must be laminated with no open sides or ends, with a hole punched in the upper left-hand corner of the pass and contained on a split binder ring. Passes must be in alphabetical order by last name, all players first and then followed by team officials at the end. If a State Association uses credit card style (plastic) player cards, they are exempt from the laminating requirement, but still need to be contained on a split binder ring.



PROTOCOL 505 HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

All US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup competitions are governed by a “Stay to Play” policy. All participating teams are required to utilize the designated housing provider of the competition. It is the responsibility of the State Association to monitor and enforce the housing requirements for their teams. The minimum requirement for all teams is 24 room-nights.

A fine of \$1,500 may be assessed for noncompliance with the housing requirements at any level of the National Presidents Cup competitions.

All fines will be invoiced to the State Association and must be remitted directly to and are retained by US Youth Soccer prior to the start of the competition. Any State Association failing to promptly remit fines may be considered in bad standing and teams from that State Association may not be permitted to participate. The State Association is responsible for collecting any fine(s) from their teams.

PROTOCOL 506 PLAYER & TEAM WAIVER REQUESTS

Players that register with a State Association after the state qualifying event or have other unusual or extenuating circumstances may submit a request for a waiver to the Regional Presidents Cup Program Manager. Submitted requests will be reviewed by the Regional Program Manager or the Presidents Cup Management Group. Additional information may be requested prior to any decision.

In state associations where the geography of the state or other circumstances hinder participation in a state league, a viable state league does not exist, or an existing state league does not offer an appropriate level of competition, teams that have earned the right to advance to a Regional competition but also participated in the US Youth Soccer National League may submit a request for a waiver to the Regional Program Manager.

PROTOCOL 507 ROSTERS

Teams must submit a roster which lists all players participating in the competition. All rosters shall include the number of each player’s jersey. 12U teams may roster up to 16 players and all rostered players may participate. 13U, 14U, 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U teams may roster up to 22 players. A maximum of 18 players are eligible to play in a match. Any players on the team roster not participating in a match may sit on the bench in street clothes. Once identified, the sitting players may not be substituted into that match.

Teams are strongly encouraged to roster a **minimum** of two (2) credentialed team officials. There may be situations when a credentialed team official is required to leave the technical area and teams must have at least one (1) credentialed team official in the technical area at all times during a match.

States must verify the eligibility of all players listed on the roster and that participating teams maintain a roster continuity of at least nine (9) players (eight (8) players for 12U teams) from the state qualifying competition to the Regional and National Presidents Cup competition(s). By confirming and locking a team’s roster in the US Youth Soccer GotSport platform, the State Association is certifying compliance with all National Presidents Cup competitions policies and rules, including, but not limited to, age verification.



PROTOCOL 508 FINAL ROSTER FREEZE DATE

Rosters are submitted through the US Youth Soccer GotSport platform, and information will be provided to state Associations and teams detailing the process. Each team must submit a roster of not more than 22 players at each level of the National Presidents Cup competitions. All information listed on the submitted roster must be verified and approved by an appropriate official of the State Association in advance of the final roster freeze date, which is **7 days** before the first scheduled match of the competition.

Submitted rosters must include jersey numbers (no duplicates are allowed) and each player's primary position. All coaches listed on the roster must be approved by the State Association.

It is strongly recommended that **well in advance** of the final roster freeze date, teams should enter and confirm all player data, verify that it is accurate and that all participating players are listed. **The final responsibility for ensuring that all participating players are listed on the official team roster before the roster freeze date rests solely with the team.** It is strongly recommended that teams allow adequate time to work with their State Association to resolve any unforeseen issues before the roster freeze date.

PROTOCOL 509 COMMITMENT & WITHDRAWAL DATES, FINES & SCHEDULE

Commitment Dates

February 1: A soft commitment must be submitted indicating the number of teams each State Association is planning to send to the Regional Presidents Cup competition, as well as interest in filling any potential wildcard slots. This information is for internal planning purposes and non-binding. The Regional Program Manager must be immediately informed of any changes to these soft commitments.

April 1: A final, hard commitment confirming the number of teams a State Association will send to the Regional Presidents Cup competition. Invoices will be sent to State Associations reflecting the commitment, with a due date of May 1. Invoices must be paid by May 1 or all teams from the State Association are subject to disqualification from the Regional Presidents Cup Competition.

Withdrawal Dates & Fines

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fine</u>
Between April 1 and April 30:	Entry fee
Between May 1 and May 15:	Entry fee + \$1,000
Between May 16 and May 31:	Entry fee + \$2,500
After June 1:	Entry fee + \$5,000

All fines will be invoiced to the State Association and must be remitted directly to, and are retained by, US Youth Soccer prior to the start of the Regional Presidents Cup competitions. Any State Association failing to promptly remit fines may be considered in bad standing and teams from that State Association may not be permitted to participate in the Regional Presidents Cup competition. The State Association is responsible for collecting any fine(s) from their teams.

Final Schedule

The final schedule will be released as early as possible prior to the first day of competition. Teams withdrawing from the competition close to the start of the competition may not be replaced. The remaining teams in the affected group(s) may play a reduced number of group matches.



PROTOCOL 510 WILDCARD INFORMATION

In the event a team withdraws 15 days or more prior to the first day of competition, every attempt will be made to secure wildcard team(s) in order to create an even bracket. In the event wildcard team(s) cannot be secured, the competition brackets will be adjusted as outlined in Protocol 515.

PROTOCOL 511 FAILURE TO APPEAR FOR A MATCH

Should a team fail to appear for a match at any US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup competitions, regardless of the circumstances, a fine of up to \$5,000 may be assessed.

Teams withdrawing after the start of any US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup competitions may be assessed a fine of up to \$5,000.

All fines will be invoiced to the State Association and must be remitted directly to and are retained by US Youth Soccer. The State Association is responsible for collecting any fine(s) from their teams.

PROTOCOL 512 MATCH DAY

Teams should come to the fields dressed in the appropriate (dark or light) uniforms.

Referees will collect member passes from each team and verify them during their review. A maximum of 18 players are permitted to be dressed for any match during the competition. If a team roster has more than 18 players listed, a **credentialed** team official must inform the referee which players are not participating in the match, and the referee will cross them off the official match card. Non-participating players **may not** be substituted into the match under any circumstances. Non-participating players are permitted to sit on the team bench and must wear **a top different in color than the jerseys (both team and opponent) in use for the match**. Additionally, non-participating players **may not wear soccer socks, shin guards or cleats**.

Shade tents will be provided at team benches. If deemed necessary by the Event Management Team, hydration breaks (3 minutes maximum) will be implemented. Players may leave the field and be substituted if desired. The referee will add time to compensate. During matches, substitutes in the team bench area or warming up adjacent to it should wear pinnies to distinguish them from players on the field.

If a player is sent off by the referee, that player may remain on the team bench. Should that player's behavior subsequently become a disturbance and the player is dismissed by the referee, **a credentialed team official must escort and remain with** the player at a location out of sight and sound of the field until the referee crew has departed the field of play after the conclusion of the match.

If a team official is dismissed by the referee, they **must** leave the vicinity of the field before the match will be restarted. It is the responsibility of a State Representative or other designee to ensure that the dismissed team official remains out of sight and sound of the field.

Teams are strongly encouraged to roster a **minimum** of two (2) credentialed team officials. As outlined, there may be situations when a credentialed team official is required to leave the technical area and all teams must have at least one (1) credentialed team official in the technical area at all times during a match.

After each match, teams should ensure that the bench area is clean and that they vacate the technical area as quickly as possible to allow the next participants to prepare for their match.

US Youth Soccer Concussion Protocols are utilized at all National Presidents Cup competitions, including a mandatory medical release in order to return to play. The host state may have additional laws or protocols regarding concussions which must also be followed.



PROTOCOL 513 DRONES

The use of non-approved Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), more simply known as a Drone, at any event that is sanctioned by US Youth Soccer is strictly prohibited. The use of any UAS at any US Youth Soccer event must be approved by US Youth Soccer for a specified promotional activity at an event, in a designated area or areas that are away from youth soccer players, spectators and over any field for play or practice.

Any person violating this policy shall be immediately removed from the event by the US Youth Soccer authority managing the event.

PROTOCOL 514 US YOUTH SOCCER ATHLETE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The US Youth Soccer Athlete Incident Management System (AIMS) is a reporting tool designed to streamline the injury management process while acknowledging any local, state and/or federal laws as well as any US Youth Soccer policies related to injury documentation and education requirements. Use of the AIMS system is mandatory at all US Youth Soccer National Presidents Cup competitions.

For any suspected concussions, the player will be immediately removed from participation as outlined in US Youth Soccer policies and procedures. Event Athletic Trainers must submit a report in AIMS immediately and update the Return-to-Play status to "Not Cleared".

Return-to-Play can only occur once the player has been cleared by a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy specializing in concussion treatment and management. The player must be certified by that medical professional to be symptom free. Athletes may not return to play until they have been cleared by an appropriate medical professional.

Only authorized USYS staff and committee members are authorized to update an athletes Return-to-Play status. The official clearance document, signed by an appropriate medical professional, must be presented at competition headquarters.

Any other injury, regardless of type, resulting in a player's removal from a game for any amount of time must be reported in AIMS within 24 hours.



PROTOCOL 515 COMPETITION BRACKETS

Wherever possible, brackets will be comprised of an even number of teams. Wildcards will be utilized to fill out brackets when available. In the event of late team withdrawals or other unusual situations, brackets with an odd number of teams may result. The event Presidents Cup Management Group will make every effort to avoid these situations but in some cases it may be unavoidable. A minimum of three (3) teams is required to make a bracket.

3-Team Bracket | One Group of 3

Teams play a round robin to determine standings. Group winner and runner-up advance to a final.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A3 vs A1	A2 vs A3
A3 Bye	A2 Bye	A1 Bye

4-Team Bracket | One Group of 4

Teams play a round robin to determine standings. Group winner and runner-up advance to a final.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4

5-Team Bracket | One Group of 5

Teams play a round robin to determine group standings. Each team will have a day where no match is played. The Champion and Finalist are determined by standings at the conclusion of the round robin.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
A1 vs A2	A5 vs A1	A2 vs A5	A5 vs A4	A4 vs A2
A4 vs A3	A2 vs A3	A1 vs A4	A3 vs A1	A3 vs A5
A5 Bye	A4 Bye	A3 Bye	A2 Bye	A1 Bye

6-Team Bracket | Two Groups of 3

Teams cross over and play the opposite group to determine standings. The four (4) highest point totals (regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Highest Points vs. 4th Highest Points and 2nd Highest Points vs. 3rd Highest Points. Semi-finalists could have played each other during group play.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs B1	B1 vs A2	A1 vs B2
A2 vs B2	B2 vs A3	A2 vs B3
A3 vs B3	B3 vs A1	A3 vs B1



7-Team Bracket | One Group of 4 and One Group of 3

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Teams in the group of three (3) will have a day where no match is played. Group winners and two (2) Wildcards (the next two (2) highest point totals regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Higher Point Wildcard and Group B Winner vs Lower Point Wildcard. ***If and only if*** the Higher Point Wildcard is from Group A ***and*** the Lower Point Wildcard is from Group B, then the semifinals are modified to Group A Winner vs. Lower Point Wildcard and Group B Winner vs Higher Point Wildcard.

Note: For teams that play two (2) group matches, the average number of points earned from those two (2) matches will be added to their point total for purposes of determining advancement.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B3 vs B1	B2 vs B3
B3 Bye	B2 Bye	B1 Bye

8-Team Bracket | Two Groups of 4

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Group winners and runners-up advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Runner-Up and Group B Winner vs Group A Runner-Up.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4

9-Team Bracket | Three Groups of 3

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Each team will have a day where no match is played. Group winners and a Wildcard (the next highest point total regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Wildcard. If the Wildcard comes from Group C then the semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs Group C Winner and Group B Winner vs. Wildcard.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A3 vs A1	A2 vs A3
A3 Bye	A2 Bye	A1 Bye
B1 vs B2	B3 vs B1	B2 vs B3
B3 Bye	B2 Bye	B1 Bye
C1 vs C2	C3 vs C1	C2 vs C3
C3 Bye	C2 Bye	C1 Bye



10-Team Bracket | One Group of 4 and Two Groups of 3

The 4-team group plays a round robin to determine standings. The 3-team groups cross over and play the opposite group to determine standings. The 4-team group winner and the next three (3) highest point totals (regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. 3rd Highest Points and Highest Points vs 2nd Highest Points. Semi-finalists could have played each other during group play.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs C1	C1 vs B2	B1 vs C2
B2 vs C2	C2 vs B3	B2 vs C3
B3 vs C3	C3 vs B1	B3 vs C1

11-Team Bracket | Two Groups of 4 and One Group of 3

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Teams in the group of three (3) will have a day where no match is played. Group winners and a Wildcard (the next highest point total regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Wildcard. If the Wildcard comes from Group C then the semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs Group C Winner and Group B Winner vs. Wildcard.

Note: For teams that play two (2) group matches, the average number of points earned from those two (2) matches will be added to their point total for purposes of determining advancement.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4
C1 vs C2	C3 vs C1	C2 vs C3
C3 Bye	C2 Bye	C1 Bye

12-Team Bracket | Three Groups of 4

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Group winners and a Wildcard (the next highest point total regardless of group) advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Wildcard. If the Wildcard comes from Group C then the semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs Group C Winner and Group B Winner vs. Wildcard.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4
C1 vs C2	C2 vs C3	C3 vs C1
C3 vs C4	C4 vs C1	C2 vs C4



13-Team Bracket | One Group of 4 and Three Groups of 3

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. All teams in the 3-team groups will have a day where no match is played. Group winners advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Group D Winner.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B3 vs B1	B2 vs B3
B3 Bye	B2 Bye	B1 Bye
C1 vs C2	C3 vs C1	C2 vs C3
C3 Bye	C2 Bye	C1 Bye
D1 vs D2	D3 vs D1	D2 vs D3
D3 Bye	D2 Bye	D1 Bye

14-Team Bracket | Two Groups of 4 and Two Groups of 3

The 4-team groups play a round robin to determine standings. The 3-team groups cross over and play the opposite group to determine standings. The 4-team group winners and the two (2) highest point totals from the 3-team groups advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Highest Points and Group B Winner vs 2nd Highest Points. Semi-finalists could have played each other during group play.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4
C1 vs D1	D1 vs C2	C1 vs D2
C2 vs D2	D2 vs C3	C2 vs D3
C3 vs D3	D3 vs C1	C3 vs D1

15-Team Bracket | Three Groups of 4 and One Group of 3

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Teams in the group of three (3) will have a day where no match is played. Group winners advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Group D Winner.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4
C1 vs C2	C2 vs C3	C3 vs C1
C3 vs C4	C4 vs C1	C2 vs C4
D1 vs D2	D3 vs D1	D2 vs D3
D3 Bye	D2 Bye	D1 Bye



16-Team Bracket | Four Groups of 4

Each group plays a round robin to determine standings. Group winners advance to the semifinal round. Semifinal pairings are Group A Winner vs. Group B Winner and Group C Winner vs Group D Winner.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
A1 vs A2	A2 vs A3	A3 vs A1
A3 vs A4	A4 vs A1	A2 vs A4
B1 vs B2	B2 vs B3	B3 vs B1
B3 vs B4	B4 vs B1	B2 vs B4
C1 vs C2	C2 vs C3	C3 vs C1
C3 vs C4	C4 vs C1	C2 vs C4
D1 vs D2	D2 vs D3	D3 vs D1
D3 vs D4	D4 vs D1	D2 vs D4



CHANGE LOG

2023/24 Changes

Protocol 506: Reworded for clarity.

Protocol 508: Clarify that the Roster Freeze Date is 7 days before the start of the competition.
Addition of each player's primary position to submitted rosters.

Protocol 509: Addition of dates for withdrawal fines.

Protocol 510: Addition of fine for a team withdrawing after the start of the competition.

Protocol 512: Clarification for rostered, non-participating players on the team bench.

2024/25 Changes

Protocol 509: Modification of withdrawal fines and dates, clarification on late team withdrawals.

Protocol 512: Reworded for clarity.



APPENDIX A REGIONAL TEMPLATE

US Youth Soccer Regional Presidents Cup competitions may have differing formats and requirements as follows:

[Year] [Region Name] Presidents Cup Information

State Entry Deadline:

Entry Fee:

Event Draw:

Wildcard Process:

Age Groups:

Roster Freeze:

Withdrawal Deadline:

Competition

Location:

Group Play:

Semifinals:

Finals:

Hotel Requirements

Hotel Draw:

Min Rooms Nights Req per Team:

Fine for Hotel Non-Compliance:

Commute Housing Waiver:

Referee Requirements

Participating States Referee Ratio:

Alternate Method for Referees:

Fine for Non-Compliance:

Referee Housing:

Referee Transportation:

Referee Meals Provided:

Referee Meals Not Provided:

Match Payments/Stipends:

Fines

Forfeit Fines:

Other

Opening Ceremony:

Team Check-In:

Site Parking Fee Charged:

State Representatives: [Mandatory | Recommended]

Other Meeting(s):