



# MICHIGAN STATE YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## 2025-2026 US YOUTH SOCCER MICHIGAN STATE CUP

### COMPETITION RULES



#### 1. Competition Dates – SPRING State Cup

- All preliminary games must be played between MARCH 7, 2026 and MAY 3, 2026.
- The MSYSA State Cup Quarterfinals will be played MAY 15 – 17, 2026.
- The MSYSA State Cup Semifinals will be played MAY 15 – 17, 2026.
- The MSYSA State Cup Finals will be played MAY 29 – 31, 2026.
- The MSYSA State Cup Committee reserves the right to alter competition dates as needed by weather or other extenuating circumstances.

#### 2. Roster Deadlines – SPRING State Cup

- Official MSYSA State Cup rosters are submitted online via GotSport.
- State Cup Rosters are due into the MSYSA State Office according to when a team is initially scheduled to play their first State Cup preliminary game. See schedule below.

Date of First Scheduled JRSC Preliminary Game	JRSC Roster Due / Freeze Date
March 7 – March 13, 2026	12:00 Noon on March 6, 2026
March 14 – March 20, 2026	12:00 Noon on March 13, 2026
March 21 – March 27, 2026	12:00 Noon on March 20, 2026
March 28 – April 3, 2026	12:00 Noon on March 27, 2026
April 4 – April 10, 2026	12:00 Noon on April 3, 2026
April 11 – April 17, 2026	12:00 Noon on April 10, 2026
April 18 – April 24, 2026	12:00 Noon on April 17, 2026
April 25 – May 1, 2026	12:00 Noon on April 24, 2026
May 2 – May 3, 2026	12:00 Noon on May 1, 2026

- If a team's first scheduled game gets cancelled or postponed, the team's State Cup roster is still due according to when the game was initially scheduled to be played unless the rescheduled game is earlier than the initially scheduled game.
- State Cup Rosters are frozen at the time/day noted above for the remainder of the MSYSA State Cup. Player additions or deletions may ONLY take place by the MSYSA State Cup Committee or MSYSA State Office after the above applicable deadline in order to correct administrative errors. Administrative errors may ONLY be corrected until the team's first game. Once a team has checked in with the referees for their first game, there can be no changes to a team's State Cup roster.
  - Requests to correct administrative errors must come from a club representative or rostered team representative only. Requests from players or parents will not be entertained.
  - It is the responsibility of the person submitting the request to prove the request is the result of an honest administrative error.
  - Requests must be submitted with a \$100 fee. A credit card link can be made available.
  - All requests must be sent to [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) with enough time before a team's first game for MSYSA to review, investigate, and discuss the request, to collect payment, and to correct the administrative error (if that's the decision). Requests made with insufficient notice may not be accommodated. MSYSA is under no obligation to address requests during non-business hours.
- MSYSA reserves the right to substitute a team's league roster as their State Cup tournament roster if that team does not submit a tournament roster by the deadline noted above.

- f. If a team does not submit a tournament roster by the freeze date and if a league roster is not available to MSYSA, then MSYSA shall assess the team a \$100 *per day* late fee for each day the roster is late. Teams will not be permitted to play MSYSA State Cup games until the roster and payment are received. If teams play MSYSA State Cup games without first submitting a roster and late fees (if applicable), they shall forfeit any and all games played until the rosters and fees are received.

### 3. Tournament Format

- a. The MSYSA State Cup will have two (2) divisions – the ELITE division and the PREMIER division.
- b. Teams may request a preferred division, however, division placement is the discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Committee.
- c. The MSYSA State Cup Committee will not entertain appeals or protests of any kind based on the division placement of teams.
- d. The Elite division is intended for teams that participate in any multi-state regional or national league (USYS National League and others) and some Great Lakes Premier League teams. Other teams may be considered at the discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Committee.
- e. The Premier division is intended for teams that participate in the Michigan State Premier Soccer Program and select leagues throughout Michigan. Other teams may be considered, including Great Lakes Premier League teams, at the discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Committee.
- f. Teams who play in a multi-state regional or national league and who do not wish to play in the Elite Division of State Cup MUST send an email to [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) no later than the application deadline and outline their reasons for wanting placement in the Premier Division. However, the MSYSA State Cup Committee is under no obligation to accommodate any such request. See Rule 3(b) above.
- g. U13 – U18/U19 winners of the Premier division are expected to advance to the US Youth Soccer Midwest President's Cup as the state representative.
- h. U13 – U18/U19 winners of the Elite Division are expected to advance to the US Youth Soccer National Championships as the state representative.
- i. If a team chooses not to accept an earned spot at a regional or national US Youth Soccer competition, they must notify the MSYSA State Office of their intention in writing at least 60 days prior to that competition. This includes those teams who qualify in the spring with less than 60 days between State Cup and the regional tournament(s).
- j. If a team chooses not to accept an earned spot, that spot may be offered to another team in that same State Cup age/gender/division at the discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Committee.
- k. In instances where there cannot be at least eight (8) teams in a State Cup age/gender/division, the MSYSA State Cup Committee may elect to combine age groups or divisions.
- l. The MSYSA State Cup will have four (4) distinct rounds – the Preliminary Games, Quarterfinal Round, Semifinal Round, and Finals Round.
- m. Any age/gender/division with fifteen (15) or less teams will not have a Quarterfinal Round. Teams will advance from the Preliminary Games to the Semifinal Round.
- n. In the preliminary rounds, all age groups and divisions will consist of four (4) or five (5) team pools.
- o. Within a specific State Cup age/gender/division, all preliminary round brackets will contain the same number of teams.
- p. To ensure that all brackets (within a specific age/gender/division) contain the same number of teams, the MSYSA State Cup Committee reserves the right to accept or deny teams into the tournament and into divisions based on MSYSA Junior State Cup history, MSYSA State Cup history, current league play records, league play history, team composition, prior tournament history, and/or adherence to State Cup application submission and payment deadlines.
- q. Teams will be scheduled to play three (3) or four (4) preliminary games.
- r. The preliminary games round will be conducted using a "round robin" format.
- s. All preliminary games are scheduled by the teams involved, unless MSYSA intervention is necessary.
- t. Winners of each pool in the preliminary rounds and wildcards (when applicable) will advance to the next subsequent round.
- u. The MSYSA State Cup Committee will schedule and host all Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games.

#### **4. Team Eligibility – SPRING State Cup**

- a. The MSYSA State Cup is for current USYS-affiliated and MSYSA-affiliated teams and members only.
- b. Teams who do not play in a USYS or MSYSA-affiliated league can register directly with MSYSA (and receive an MSYSA roster and pass cards) to become eligible to participate in State Cup.
- c. A team may not participate in the MSYSA State Cup and the MSYSA Junior State Cup within the same seasonal year.
- d. All team officials and players must have their physical (not electronic) US Youth Soccer/MSYSA pass cards available at any/all State Cup games for referees to conduct check-in. Failure to have pass cards on site may result in those people not being allowed to participate.
- e. All teams must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective US Soccer-affiliated governing body.
- f. All teams must play in a minimum of a four-team MSYSA affiliated league or MSYSA approved league during the SPRING 2026 season (January 2026 – May 2026). The team must play at least three (3) complete league games with a record of scores and standings during the SPRING 2026 season (January 2026 – May 2026). The league must be sanctioned or specifically approved by the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association.
- g. If a team's frozen State Cup roster does not meet the eligibility requirements set forth in these rules (and it is not corrected in accordance with Rule 2d), the team shall face sanctions as determined by the MSYSA State Cup Chair and/or State Cup Chair Designee which may include forfeiture, fines, and/or disqualifications. Furthermore, an ineligible team roster may be grounds to deny the team and/or team coach participation in future MSYSA State Cups.

#### **5. Team Official Eligibility**

- a. All team officials must be registered with MSYSA.
- b. All team officials must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective US Soccer-affiliated governing body.
- c. All team officials must be Risk Management certified by the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association and must have a current MSYSA Risk Management Card at all of their MSYSA State Cup games.
- d. All team officials must have completed the CDC Heads-Up Online Training Course within the past three (3) years of each State Cup game in which they participate.
- e. All team officials must have completed the SafeSport Training through the US Center for SafeSport within the past year of each State Cup game in which they participate.

#### **6. Player Eligibility**

- a. All players (including club pass card players) must be registered with MSYSA.
- b. All players (including class pass card players) must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective US Soccer-affiliated governing body.
- c. Players must be properly registered with MSYSA before being eligible to appear on a team's State Cup roster.
- d. At least 50% of the team's players must be residents of Michigan.
- e. For teams competing in the U13 - U15 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 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.
- f. For the teams competing in the U16 – U18/U19 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 that seasonal year, or (B) of the age of any younger age group, through the U14 age group, of that age group competition in which the team is participating in that seasonal year.

- g. A player's age group is determined by their date of birth:

Age Group	Dates of Birth
U18/U19	1-1-08 to 12-31-07
U17	1-1-09 to 12-31-09
U16	1-1-10 to 12-31-10
U15	1-1-11 to 12-31-11
U14	1-1-12 to 12-31-12
U13	1-1-13 to 12-31-13
U12	1-1-14 to 12-31-14
U11	1-1-15 to 12-31-15

- h. A player may only play for one team in a State Cup competition (USYS National Championships or USYS National President's Cup pathway) within a given seasonal year. If a player is on the tournament roster of a team when the roster is frozen, the player may not be on the tournament roster of any other team from any other state association in a State Cup Competition ((USYS National Championships or USYS National President's Cup pathway) within that same seasonal year. This also means that a player can only play for one team, regardless of division, within the MSYSA State Cup (fall or spring).
- i. All players must adhere to FIFA policies, US Soccer policies, and MSYSA policies on international clearance. If needed, a player must have approved international clearance on file with US Soccer before being eligible to appear on a State Cup roster and no later than the MSYSA State Cup Roster freeze date as noted in these rules.
- j. A team may not roster any player who was previously rostered during the seasonal year to a team from another club, unless the player's release and transfer request has been approved by the organizations involved.
- k. If an illegal/ ineligible player appears on the MSYSA State Cup Roster at the time of the roster freeze deadline (and it is not corrected in accordance with Rule 2d) or if a team uses an ineligible player at any point during the State Cup competition, the team shall face sanctions as determined by the MSYSA State Cup Chair and/or State Cup Chair Designee which may include forfeiture, fines, and/or disqualifications. Furthermore, the use of an ineligible player may be grounds to deny the team and/or team coach participation in future MSYSA State Cups.

## **7. State Cup Tournament Rosters & Game Reports**

- a. An MSYSA State Cup Roster may have a maximum of 22 players or a minimum of 11 players for all teams.
- b. Teams are strongly encouraged to list more than one team official on each game report in case of coach ejections, coaching conflicts, or suspensions.
- c. It is the team's responsibility to put ALL desired players, including club pass players, on their State Cup tournament roster.
- d. A team shall select up to 18 players from their tournament roster to play in each State Cup game. This selection must be documented for each game on the official MSYSA State Cup Game Report.
- e. Only players appearing on the MSYSA State Cup Roster are eligible to appear on the official MSYSA State Cup Game Report and are eligible to compete in the MSYSA State Cup.
- f. The MSYSA Official Game Report with the 18-player game roster selection must be submitted to the referees at the time of check-in. No changes will be allowed to the game roster after the team has checked in.

## **8. Club Pass Carding Within the MSYSA State Cup**

- a. Club pass carding is permitted within the MSYSA State Cup provided all subsequent rules are met.
- b. A player may only play for one team in the MSYSA State Cup (regardless of division) within each seasonal year.

- c. A player may only club pass card for a team in the MSYSA State Cup if that team belongs to the same club as the player's primary team. (See "Club" definition below).
- d. A club pass card player must appear on a team's frozen State Cup roster.
- e. A team must be able to demonstrate continuity between their official state association roster and State Cup roster by having a minimum of eleven (11) players common to both rosters.

## **9. Definition of "Club"**

- a. A "Club" is defined as an organization providing structured soccer training and competition for its members.
- b. A club may be a direct member of MSYSA, an associate member of MSYSA, or an indirect member of MSYSA which registers players with MSYSA.
- c. At no time shall an affiliated member who functions as a "scheduling" league also be considered a club.
- d. In the case where a club sets up satellite branches in the state, those satellite branches may only be considered part of the main club for the purposes of the MSYSA State Cup, National Championship Series, and President's Cup if the teams and players from the satellite branch are registered in the same GotSoccer account as the main club.
- e. The only exception to C above is if all the following criteria are met:
  - i. The main club and satellite branch have the same Board of Directors
  - ii. The main club and satellite branch have the same Tax ID Number
- f. All teams from within a club must have similarly designed uniforms with similar colors, logos, and other acceptable identifying marks.

## **10. Seeding**

- a. The MSYSA State Cup Committee shall seed teams in the ELITE division with input from the clubs involved. The MSYSA State Cup Committee aims to have one (1) seeded team in each preliminary bracket. All non-seeded teams will be placed into brackets randomly by the MSYSA State Cup Committee.
- b. The MSYSA State Cup Committee shall not seed any teams in the PREMIER division. Instead, teams will be placed into brackets so that brackets are as competitively balanced as possible.
- c. For both divisions, a maximum of two (2) teams from the same club may be placed in the same preliminary bracket unless it is impossible to adhere to that restriction.
- d. The MSYSA State Cup Committee's decision regarding seeding and bracketing is final. Teams may not appeal their decision.

## **11. Scheduling & Scheduling Conflicts**

- a. MSYSA State Cup games take precedence over league games.
- b. All teams must schedule their respective preliminary games immediately upon receipt of the release of State Cup bracketing information. It is recommended that teams schedule their State Cup preliminary games prior to scheduling league games.
- c. Preliminary game dates, times, and locations must be mutually agreed upon by both coaches. Games that are more than 60 miles one way must be played on a Saturday or a Sunday unless it is otherwise mutually agreed upon to play on another day.
- d. Teams may not be scheduled to play any more than two (2) MSYSA State Cup games on any one day.
- e. If both coaches cannot agree on game date(s), time(s), and location(s) for their preliminary games, the MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair Designee will schedule the game(s). Scheduling of the game is at the sole discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Chair or State Cup Chair Designee. The game(s) must be played as scheduled by the MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair Designee.
- f. All games scheduled by MSYSA-affiliated leagues are required to be rescheduled in order to allow teams to compete in the MSYSA State Cup.
- g. No MSYSA-affiliated league can forfeit any game of any team for the day that the team is playing in the MSYSA State Cup competition (see exception below).

- h. Teams must not schedule league games on the dates of the State Cup Quarterfinals, Semifinals, or Finals. If a conflict arises because of failure to adhere to the rule, ability to reschedule league games is at the discretion of the League.

## **12. Preliminary Game Schedule Reporting – SPRING State Cup**

- a. Preliminary game schedules (date, time, location, field number, etc) are due in to MSYSA no later than 12:00pm on FEBRUARY 18, 2026. The home team (or home team's club) is responsible for putting the mutually agreed upon preliminary game schedule in GotSoccer.
- b. Failure to schedule preliminary games and put the mutually agreed upon schedule in GotSoccer by the deadline may result in sanctions, including but not limited to, forfeiture of home field advantage, game forfeiture, and/or fines.

## **13. Preliminary Game Cancellation & Rescheduling**

- a. Teams may request that a kick-off time be changed due to lighting concerns by submitting the request to [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) with sufficient advance notice (as determined by MSYSA). If the request cannot be accommodated, the game shall kick-off as initially scheduled.
- b. Preliminary games may NOT be cancelled or rescheduled for any reason other than weather (including weather-related field conditions). In instances where games must be cancelled/rescheduled due to weather, **the home team must notify MSYSA ([StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org)) AND the Coordinator of MSYSA Assigning ([eshrews@gmail.com](mailto:eshrews@gmail.com), 248-467-7846) as soon as possible**. Proof of closure by the field owner may be required.
- c. If the home team does not notify MSYSA in time to cancel the assigned referees, the referee fees shall be paid by the home team. The fees must be paid before the rescheduled game will be permitted to be played.
- d. When preliminary games must be rescheduled, the home team is responsible for submitting the new game schedule to MSYSA via e-mail. In most cases, MSYSA needs a minimum of three (3) days to find referees for rescheduled games.

## **14. Preliminary Game Score Reporting**

- a. The Home Team is always the first team listed.
- b. The winning team (or Home Team in event of a tie) of each preliminary game must **report the score** (via GotSport) within 24 hours of the completion of the game.
- c. The winning team (or Home Team in event of a tie) of each preliminary game must **submit the game report** (via GotSport) within 24 hours of the completion of the game.
- d. Failure to report the game report and game scores may result in disqualification of the winning team (or the home team in the event of a tie) and/or a \$100 fine.

## **15. Fields & Field Status**

- a. With respect to preliminary games, it is expected that each team accepted in to the MSYSA State Cup utilize what they believe to be the best fields available to them. Should the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Chairperson Designee be made aware that fields in "poor" condition are being used or are less than appropriate for MSYSA State Cup play, a fine (not exceeding \$500 per game) may be levied and a determination may be made by the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee that the field(s) will not be used for future MSYSA State Cup play. A list of fields not permitted for State Cup games shall be made available to teams.
- b. MSYSA may add a field to the list of fields not permitted for State Cup games for any reason, including, but not limited to, the repeated relocation of games due to field closures.
- c. The repeated relocation of games due to field closures may result in the home team being fined for each relocation request (fine not to exceed \$100 per occurrence).
- d. Determination of field status as to its playing condition rests with the organization providing the fields and the MSYSA State Cup Chair and/or the State Cup Chair Designee.

- e. If the host organization approves the field for play, the field may be cancelled at a later time if the host organization, the MSYSA State Cup Chair and/or State Cup Chair Designee deem the conditions to have changed.
- f. The referee, MSYSA State Cup Chair, and/or State Cup Chair Designee may suspend games when he/she considers the field unsafe or unplayable.

## **16. Field of Play**

- a. Teams shall report to the field of play at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the game to allow for the check in of players.
- b. Teams are to be seated on opposite sides of the field, unless otherwise directed by MSYSA or unless it is impractical to do so based on field/facility set-up.
- c. All team personnel who are not players must have a MSYSA pass card, MSYSA risk management card, and be listed on the MSYSA State Cup Game Report. All others without a MSYSA pass card and MSYSA risk management card must remain in the spectator area(s), unless directed otherwise by MSYSA.
- d. Each team may have a maximum of three (3) team officials (coaches, assistant coaches, managers) in the team bench area provided that each individual has a risk management card and a MSYSA pass card. Absolutely no more than three (3) team officials are permitted, even with proper passes and credentials.
- e. For all age groups, players who are on the MSYSA State Cup Roster but are NOT selected to the eighteen (18) member game roster may remain in the bench area but may not wear the match jersey. These players are permitted to wear the alternate team jersey.

## **17. Coaching from the Touchline**

- a. A coach may coach their own team from the touchline provided that mechanical devices are not used, tone of voice is informative and not a harangue, and they stay in their technical area (when one exists), in the area near their own team bench, or in the area as directed by the referee.
- b. "Mechanical Devices" (above) includes but is not limited to cell phones and other devices as determined by the State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee.
- c. Failure to abide by the aforementioned criteria in coaching from the touchline may result in sanctions by the MSYSA State Cup Committee such as dismissal of coaches and other team officials, game suspensions, game forfeitures, and fees.

## **18. Spectators**

- a. Coaches are responsible for the spectators that accompany their team.
- b. Spectators will occupy the same side as their team, unless otherwise directed by MSYSA or unless it is impractical to do so based on field/facility set-up.
- c. No artificial noisemakers of any kind are permitted. The MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Chairperson Designee has the final decision in case of any discrepancies or interpretations of this rule.
- d. If it becomes evident that the spectator(s) become unruly and cannot be controlled, the field will be cleared of all spectators. If spectators refuse to leave the field of play, the game will be suspended and perhaps forfeited upon an investigation by the MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair Designee.
- e. If a game must be replayed because of a spectator's behavior, no spectators will be allowed at the game site of the replayed game.
- f. A coach and/or team may be fined a maximum of \$1,000 as a result of unacceptable spectator behavior or referee abuse.
- g. The MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Designee reserves the right to remove any spectator from the fields or facility whose behavior is deemed inappropriate and/or whose presence imposes a threat to any member of the MSYSA membership, board, or staff.

## **19. Unmanned Aircraft System (Drones)**

- a. The use of non-approved unmanned aircraft systems (ex: drones) is strictly prohibited at any/all State Cup games.
- b. The use of unmanned aircraft systems may be approved by MSYSA for a specified promotional activity given that the request is submitted in writing to the MSYSA State Office.

- c. Any person in violation of this policy shall be immediately removed from the field, facility, and/or event.

## 20. Referees

- a. The MSYSA State Cup Referee Assigning Committee will assign referees to ALL State Cup games, including Preliminary, Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games.
- b. Teams must use the referees as assigned by the MSYSA State Cup Referee Assigning Committee. Failure to do so may result in game forfeiture and applicable fees by one or both teams.
- c. For all MSYSA State Cup preliminary games, referee fees shall be paid prior to the start of the game, and the fees shall be divided equally among the teams playing.
- d. MSYSA is responsible for the payment of referee fees for the MSYSA State Cup Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games only.
- e. The center referee for each game should be at least one year older than the players and all referees should be USSF certified.
- f. Neither the center referee nor assistant referees shall have an immediate family member participating in the MSYSA State Cup game they are officiating, unless it has been disclosed in advance and agreed to by the participating teams.
- g. Games may be played with only two MSYSA assigned referees present.

## 21. MSYSA State Cup Referee Fees

- a. If a State Cup game is scheduled to be played at a site which charges admission or parking fees, the home team is responsible for reimbursing the referees in cash prior to the start of the game for any/all admission or parking fees.
- b. Referee fees vary by age group, as detailed below:

Age	Center Referee	Asst. Referees	Total Cost	Individual Team Cost
U13 & U14	\$70.00	\$50.00 each	\$170.00 per game	\$85.00 per game
U15 & U16	\$80.00	\$55.00 each	\$190.00 per game	\$95.00 per game
U17, U18, U19	\$90.00	\$60.00 each	\$210.00 per game	\$105.00 per game

- c. In the event there are less than three (3) assigned referees present, those that are present shall receive game fees as indicated above and the remainder of the fees shall be returned to the teams.

## 22. Game Format

- a. FIFA Laws of the Game will govern all games unless modified by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, or the MSYSA State Cup Chair, State Cup Chair Designee, or State Cup Committee.
- b. Modification(s) may be made with or without notice.
- c. Length of game is detailed below:

Age	Game Length	Overtime
U13-U14	35 Minute Halves	10 Minute Halves
U15-U16	40 Minute Halves	15 Minute Halves
U17-U19	45 Minute Halves	15 Minute Halves

- d. Overtimes periods shall only be used in Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games.
- e. In the event of a tie game after regulation time during a Quarterfinal, Semifinal, or Final game, there will be two (2) overtime periods.
- f. If after two (2) full overtime periods the game is still tied, "Kicks from the Mark" will be conducted and Laws of the Game will apply.
- g. The MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair Designee may determine that a game is complete at any time after the commencement of the second half provided that no team is at fault for the stoppage.



### **23. MSYSA State Cup Games Played Indoors**

- a. A ball that comes in contact with the ceiling, roof, structure, etc. shall be restarted at the closest point of contact as an indirect free kick for the team that kicked the ball into the ceiling, etc. AND the ball must be kicked to their opponent's goalkeeper.

### **24. Substitutions**

- a. In the U13 – U14 age groups, teams shall be permitted unlimited substitutions for all games, including overtimes.
- b. In the U15 – U18/U19 age groups, a maximum of seven (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. However, if a player is removed from the game and no substitute enters the same for the player (the team plays short), the original player may re-enter the game. Entry shall be at a normal substitution point with approval of the referee or at any point during the game if the referee signals for the player's re-entry.
- c. Either team may make a substitution with the referee's permission at any stoppage in play.
- d. Once the teams go into an overtime period, all players, excluding players who may have received a red card, are eligible to play.

### **25. Head Injuries**

- a. If a player suffers a significant blow to the head, is suspected of having suffered a concussion, or has an apparent head injury during the course of a game, the team must remove the player from the game for a medical evaluation by a Health Care Professional (as defined in the MSYSA Concussion Policy).
- b. A temporary substitute for the evaluation of a suspected concussion/head injury is permitted and will not count against a team's total number of allowed substitutions, however a team may only make a temporary substitution if they have a substitution available.
- c. If the player with the suspected head injury has received clearance from a Health Care Professional (as defined in the MSYSA Concussion policy) to return to the game, the player may re-enter at any stoppage of play. The evaluated player must replace the original substitute.
- d. The player that was temporarily substituted into the game for the player with the suspected head injury will be considered an available substitute and is permitted to re-enter the game as a standard substitute per competition rules.
- e. Any cautions assessed to the substituted player will carry with that player throughout the remainder of the game, any red card to the substitute would apply to the team and the team would be required to utilize a substitution (if available) for the player with the suspected head injury to replace a different player.
- f. If the game ends before the player with the head injury is cleared to return, the temporary substitute must be marked on the game reports or 4<sup>th</sup> Official Log (when applicable) as a permanent substitute.
- g. For all Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games, and any preliminary game with a Healthcare Professional on-site (HCP as defined in the MSYSA Concussion policy) - If a coach seeks to allow a player to re-enter the game who has been removed from the game for further evaluation by a Health Care Professional and who not yet received such medical clearance, that coach shall be issued a warning.

### **26. Uniforms**

- a. With the exception of the goalkeeper, each player shall wear differently numbered and similarly designed jerseys. Uniform numbers must be permanently affixed to the jersey (i.e. no taped or pinned numbers).
- b. Goalkeepers must wear colors that differentiate them from the field players.
- c. Unless otherwise specified, all FIFA, US Youth Soccer, and MSYSA rules regarding uniform acceptability will apply.
- d. In addition to teams wearing different color jerseys, teams must also wear different color socks.

- e. In cases of dispute over color of jerseys, socks, or shorts, the home team shall wear light jerseys/socks and the visiting team shall wear dark jerseys/socks. If, at the discretion of the referees, the colors are too similar, it is the home team's responsibility to change into alternate jerseys, socks, or shorts.
- f. At no point during the regional or national levels of the USYS National Championships Series or President's Cup will logos from organizations competing with US Youth Soccer be permitted.

## **27. Scoring Method**

- a. The standings of teams within a bracket are based upon the number of points earned in a preliminary game. Team points shall be awarded as follows:
  - Three points for a win (including forfeits, but subject to the rule on forfeitures).
  - One point for a tie.
  - Zero points for a loss.

## **28. Tie Breaker Criteria**

- a. In the event teams are tied on points earned during preliminary games, the team's advancement shall be determined in accordance with the following sequential criteria:
  - Winner of head-to-head competition. However, this criterion shall not be used when more than two teams are tied in points in their respective pool.
  - Winner of most games in their respective pool.
  - Goal differential (goals scored minus goals against) with a maximum of five per game. The team with the highest goal differential advances.
  - Fewest goals allowed. The team with the fewest goals allowed advances.
  - Double blind draw conducted by the MSYSA State Office (this shall only apply when all teams have earned a position in the round following the preliminary games).
  - Kicks from the penalty mark.
- b. If more than two teams are tied in points in the pool of play, the sequence shall be followed until one team is eliminated.
- c. Once one team has been eliminated, the remaining teams shall then restart the sequence above at "winner of most games in their respective pool" until the tie is broken.

## **29. Wildcard Selection Criteria**

- a. Wildcards are numbered with #1 being the highest position, #2 being the next highest position, and so forth.
- b. For age groups requiring wildcard(s) for Quarterfinal or Semifinal play, wildcard qualification shall be determined in accordance with the following sequential criteria:
  - Teams with the most points.
  - Winner of head-to-head competition. However, this criterion shall not be used when more than two teams are tied in points.
  - Goal differential (goals scored minus goals against) with a maximum of five per game. The team with the highest goal differential receives the higher wildcard position.
  - Fewest goals allowed. The team with the fewest goals allowed receives the higher wildcard position.
  - Double blind draw conducted by the MSYSA State Office (this shall only apply when all teams have earned a position in the round following the preliminary games).
  - Kicks from the penalty mark.
- b. If more than two teams are tied, the sequence in A shall be followed until one team is eliminated.
- c. Once one team has been eliminated, the remaining teams shall then restart the sequence above until the tie is broken.
- d. It is acceptable for two teams from the same preliminary pool to play against each other in the Quarterfinal Round and all other subsequent rounds.
- e. Wildcard placement shall be at the discretion of the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson and/or the State Cup Chairperson Designee

### 30. Forfeitures

- a. A minimum of seven players and one team official constitutes a team.
- b. A fifteen-minute grace period shall be allowed beyond the official start time of the game if seven players and one team official are not available at start time. If seven players and one team official are available, then the game can commence. If at the end of the 15-minute grace period the team still does not have seven players and one team official, the referee will suspend the game and report the failure of the team to take the field on the MSYSA State Cup game reports.
- c. The MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Chairperson Designee may determine the game to be forfeited after examining the game report and conducting an investigation.
- d. In the event that any team is suspected of forfeiting a game or Kicks from the Mark competition with the design or purpose of controlling the advancement of any team from its own bracket or any other bracket, the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Chairperson Designee may require such an advancing team to play another qualifying game against the next highest ranking team that would otherwise be eligible to advance.
- e. A team that fails to take the field because of withdrawal from the MSYSA State Cup (or game) after the deadline may be subject to sanctions levied by the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson, State Cup Chairperson Designee, State Cup Committee, or the MSYSA Board of Directors.
- f. All clubs will be responsible for their teams' compliance of MSYSA State Cup rules.
- g. The score awarded to the winning team resulting from a forfeiture is 3 – 0.
- h. **A forfeiting team and/or its club will be fined a minimum of \$500.00 per game forfeited.** Any team and/or club that does not pay the fine will be considered in bad standing and the team and/or club will not be permitted to play in any future MSYSA State Cup games until MSYSA receives payment.

### 31. Warnings, Sendoffs, and Disciplinary Actions

- a. A team receiving three red cards (or more) or five yellow cards (or more) in one State Cup game may result in the team coach needing to appear before the MSYSA Board for review and/or sanctions.
- b. A team official receiving two red cards (or more) within the same season (fall or spring) may result in the team official needing to appear before the MSYSA Board for review and/or sanctions.
- c. The MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or State Cup Chairperson Designee shall hold all pass cards for suspended participants during the Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games.
- d. Game suspensions due to red cards received in State Cup must be served during the next State Cup, National Championship Series, or President's Cup game as applicable.
- e. If a player or coach receives a suspension in a USYS National Championships Series game (including State Cup) or a USYS President's Cup game (including State Cup) and that suspension is not fulfilled in the same seasonal year, it will follow the player or coach to the next USYS National Championship Series game or USYS President's Cup game in which the player or coach participates.
- f. In order for a player to officially serve their suspension, the player's name must appear on the game roster and there must be an indication that the player did not play due to suspension.
- g. A team official may be shown a yellow card and/or verbally sanctioned for dissent.
- h. A team official may be shown a red card, verbally dismissed, or dismissed via a referee's gesture from a game for irresponsible behavior. Failure by the referee to show a physical red card does not negate the ejection, and disciplinary sanctions as noted below will still apply.
- i. The US Youth Soccer MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee will decide on the length of suspensions.
- j. Any player, coach, or other team official who has been ejected from a USYS National Championships Series game (including State Cup) or USYS President's Cup game (including State Cup) in the previous 2 years and who is ejected from a game in the current State Cup competition may receive a total suspension length greater than the minimum suspension length below.
- k. Minimum Disciplinary Sanctions:
  - Player Ejection for Accumulation of Two Yellow Cards: Minimum one game suspension
  - Player Ejection for Denying a Goal Scoring Opportunity (Handling or Foul): Minimum one game suspension
  - Player Ejection for Foul & Abusive Language: Minimum two game suspension

- Player Ejection for Spitting at Opponent: Minimum two game suspension
  - Player Ejection for Violent Conduct: Minimum two game suspension
  - Player Ejection for Serious Foul Play: Minimum two game suspension
  - Team Official Ejection for Irresponsible Behavior: Minimum one game suspension
  - Team Official Threats: Minimum two game suspension
  - Team Official Fighting: Minimum two game suspension
  - Player Fighting: Minimum two game suspension
  - Player or Team Official Striking an Official: Immediate and minimum one-year suspension from all soccer activities (separate hearing).
- g. If considered serious enough, a player, coach, or team official may face additional sanctions for other offenses as determined by the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson and/or by the State Cup Chairperson Designee.
  - h. Threatening or fighting violations at regional or national competition shall be dealt with in the following year's play.
  - i. Upon being dismissed from a game by a referee or representative of the tournament, a dismissed team official must leave the field of play quickly and quietly. This person must be far enough away that they cannot be seen or heard by officials at the field. Failure to abide by these rules may result in increased suspension length, fines, and/or game forfeitures.

### **32. Protests**

- a. Misapplication of the Laws of the Game may be a valid basis for a protest.
- b. A Referee's judgment shall not be a basis for protests.
- c. Division placement for one's own team or that of an opponent shall not be the basis for protests.
- d. A protest regarding an ineligible roster or the use of an ineligible player may be made by anyone at any time during the current year's State Cup competition.
- e. Any protest must be presented in writing to the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee within one (1) hour of the completion of the game in protest.
- f. If the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee is unavailable at the site of the game, protests may be submitted via e-mail to the MSYSA State Cup Committee at [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) within four (4) hours of the completion of the game that is being protested.
- g. All protests must be accompanied with a \$500.00 bond. If the protest is being submitted via e-mail, the protest must include a statement acknowledging that the required bond will be submitted to the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee within 24 hours of the protest.
- h. If a protest is upheld, the bond will be returned.
- i. Any protest against any team that has already been eliminated for the current year's MSYSA State Cup, Midwest Regional Championship, Midwest President's Cup, National Championships, or National President's Cup will not be entertained.
- j. Although a protest may not be entertained by the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee due to the lateness of the filing of the protest, the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee may report any misconduct by any MSYSA player, coach, or team, including the use of an ineligible player, during any portion of the MSYSA State Cup, Midwest Regional Championship, Midwest President's Cup, National Championships, or National President's Cup to the MSYSA Board of Directors or a higher authority for their consideration.

### **33. Protest of State Cup Team Application Rejection**

- a. The protest must be emailed to [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) within one (1) business day of notification of application rejection.
- b. Notification of protest will include the following:
  - Protest fee of \$250. Since the protest is being submitted via e-mail, the protest must include a statement acknowledging that the required fee will be submitted to the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee within one (1) business day. Online payment with a credit card may be permitted upon request.

- A written statement describing the specific grounds for the protest.
- All information necessary to make a fair and just decision on the protest.
- A clear and concise statement of the relief or action sought by the protesting party.
- Copies of all documents relevant to the appeal.

#### **34. Appeals**

- All decisions by the MSYSA State Office are final.
- Such decisions may be appealed to the MSYSA State Cup Chair or State Cup Chair Designee. Any appeals must be emailed to [StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org) within 48 hours of the initial decision from the MSYSA State Office.
- Notification of appeal must be accompanied by a \$500 bond. Since the appeal is being submitted via e-mail, the appeal must include a statement acknowledging that the required fee will be submitted to the MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee within one (1) business day. Online payment with a credit card may be permitted upon request.
- If the appeal is upheld, the bond will be returned. If the appeal is denied, the bond will be forfeited.
- Decisions made by the MSYSA State Cup Chair or State Cup Chair Designee may be appealed to the US Youth Soccer National Championships Series Committee or the US Youth Soccer President's Cup Committee (as appropriate) by submitting all relevant information and fees to US Youth Soccer.

#### **35. ANY DECISION MADE BY THE MSYSA STATE CUP CHAIRPERSON, STATE CUP CHAIRPERSON DESIGNEE, AND/OR US YOUTH SOCCER SHALL NOT BE THE BASIS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF A TEAM FROM STATE CUP OR THE REFUND OF A TEAM'S APPLICATION FEE. THIS INCLUDES THE DIVISION PLACEMENT OF A TEAM INTO THE MSYSA STATE CUP.**

#### **36. Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

- Players and team officials in the MSYSA State Cup competition are prohibited from consuming alcohol or using illegal drugs at the playing site of the MSYSA State Cup Competition.
- Players and team officials are also prohibited from using any form of tobacco or marijuana at the playing site of the MSYSA State Cup competition.
- The penalty for violation by player and/or team officials may be disqualification from the MSYSA State Cup competition.
- All MSYSA teams, at every level of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series and the US Youth Soccer President's Cup, must adhere to the MSYSA State Cup Alcohol and Illegal Drug Rules. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions as determined by the MSYSA State Cup Chairman and/or MSYSA State Cup Chairman Designee

#### **37. Inclement Weather**

- See the MSYSA Severe Weather policy as posted on the State Cup pages of [www.michiganyouthsoccer.org](http://www.michiganyouthsoccer.org).
- Teams that travel to MSYSA State Cup locations do so at their own risk of games being cancelled due to inclement weather.
- The referee, MSYSA State Cup Chair, and/or State Cup Chair Designee may suspend games when he/she considers the conditions unsafe.
- For all games suspended in the first half or at halftime and that are not able to resume play the same day, the game shall be rescheduled for another day with permission from MSYSA. This only applies when neither team is at fault for the initial stoppage of the game.
- The MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair Designee may determine that a game is complete at any time after the commencement of the second half provided that no team is at fault for the stoppage.
- For any preliminary round game suspended due to weather after the commencement of the second half and that is not able to resume play the same day, the score at the time of suspension shall stand unless an official representative of one of the participating teams notifies the MSYSA State Cup Committee in writing ([StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org)) within 24 hours expressing their desire to resume and

complete the game. The final decision whether to accept the score at the time of suspension or whether to allow the game to be resumed rests entirely with the State Cup Committee.

### **38. Spirit of the Game**

- a. If the US Youth Soccer MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or the State Cup Chairperson Designee determines that a particular action by a team or any of its members or spectators is deemed unacceptable for any reason, the team may be disqualified, sanctioned, and/or face forfeiture of one or more games.
- b. Any/all MSYSA teams that participate in the Midwest President's Cup, National Championships, or National President's Cup must continue to comply with MSYSA Bylaws & Rules and MSYSA State Cup Rules for continued participation.

### **39. Pleas of Ignorance**

- a. It is the responsibility of the team to read, understand, and abide by the State Cup tournament rules. A plea of ignorance to these rules is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the MSYSA State Committee and/or MSYSA State Office.

### **40. THE US YOUTH SOCCER MSYSA STATE CUP COMPETITION RULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE.**

#### **Dates To Remember:**

January 28, 2026 at 12:00PM	State Cup Application & Payment Deadline
February 3, 2026 at 9:00AM	State Cup Seeding Meeting & Bracketing Meeting (Elite Division)
February 18, 2026 at 12:00PM	State Cup Preliminary Game Schedules Due
March 6, 2026 – May 1, 2026	State Cup Roster Freezes (See Rule 2)
March 7, 2026	Preliminary Games Can Begin
May 3, 2026	Preliminary Games Must Be Completed
May 15 – May 17, 2026	MSYSA State Cup Quarterfinals & Semifinals
May 29 – May 31, 2026	MSYSA State Cup Finals

### **MEDIA GUIDELINES:**

Media credentials for access to shoot photographs and video is expected and must be issued directly from the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association. It is expected that the use of professional equipment to file photographic or video accounts when permitted access. Use of equipment such as 'point and shoot' style cameras or mobile telephones that are not considered professional equipment will result in access being rescinded.

To request media credentials, please send an e-mail to [statecup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:statecup@michiganyouthsoccer.org). Please note that no one under the age of 18 will be issued a credential without prior arrangement being made.

The deadline to apply for credentials to an MSYSA sanctioned activity (event/program/etc.) is one (1) week prior to the start date. There is no guarantee that late credentials will be issued. Pick up will be arranged on-site at the MSYSA headquarters. Proper identification must be provided to receive a credential.

**Location:** Videotaping and still photographers are permitted to shoot on the touchlines, excluding the team bench areas. At NO time is any person with credentials permitted to enter the field of play. At no time will videotaping and/or still photographers be permitted to be in or near the team benches and/or bench personnel.

**Video:** All rights to match footage including applicable copyrights belong to MSYSA and its rights holders who broadcast each specific match. If an organization is interested in recording video footage at an MSYSA match for non-news gathering purpose they should contact MSYSA State Cup at [statecup@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:statecup@michiganyouthsoccer.org).