# MICHIGAN STATE YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION
# 2026-2027 US YOUTH SOCCER MICHIGAN STATE CUP
# COMPETITION RULES

1. **Competition Dates – SPRING State Cup**
   a. All preliminary games must be played between MARCH 13, 2027, and MAY 9, 2027.
   b. The MSYSA State Cup Quarterfinals will be played MAY 21 – 23, 2027.
   c. The MSYSA State Cup Semifinals will be played MAY 21 – 23, 2027.
   d. The MSYSA State Cup Finals will be played JUNE 4 – 6, 2027.
   e. 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**
   a. Official MSYSA State Cup rosters are submitted online via GotSport.
   b. 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 Preliminary Game | Roster Due / Freeze Date |
|---|---|
| March 13 – March 19, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on March 12, 2027 |
| March 20 – March 26, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on March 19, 2027 |
| March 27 – April 2, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on March 26, 2027 |
| April 3 – April 9, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on April 2, 2027 |
| April 10 – April 16, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on April 9, 2027 |
| April 17 – April 23, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on April 16, 2027 |
| April 24 – April 30, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on April 23, 2027 |
| May 1 – May 7, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on April 30, 2027 |
| May 8 – May 9, 2027 | 12:00 Noon on May 7, 2027 |

   c. 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.
   d. 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.
      i. 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.
      ii. It is the responsibility of the person submitting the request to prove the request is the result of an honest administrative error.
      iii. Requests must be submitted with a $100 fee. A credit card link can be made available.
      iv. All requests must be sent to 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.
   e. 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. Team Selection**

a. 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.

**4. Tournament Format – Divisions & Post Tournament Events**

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 multi-state regional or national leagues 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 those from regional/national leagues and GLPL, 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 should send an email to 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.
g. U13 – U18/U19 winners of the Premier division are expected to advance to the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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.

**5. Tournament Format – Rounds & Advancement**

a. The MSYSA State Cup will have four (4) distinct rounds – the Preliminary Round, Quarterfinal Round, Semifinal Round, and Finals Round.
b. In the preliminary rounds, all age groups and divisions will consist of four (4) or five (5) team brackets. Brackets do NOT need to contain the same number of teams.
c. Teams will be scheduled to play three (3) or four (4) preliminary round games.
d. The preliminary round will be conducted using a "round robin" format.
e. Bracket winners in the preliminary rounds and wildcards (when applicable) will advance to the next subsequent round, unless noted below.
f. Any age/gender/division with fifteen (15) or less teams in the Preliminary Round will not have a Quarterfinal Round. Bracket winners and wildcard(s) will advance from the Preliminary Round to the Semifinal Round.

g. Any age/gender/division with seventeen (17), eighteen (18), or nineteen (19) teams AND a differing number of teams in Preliminary Round brackets will have a Quarterfinal Roud. First and second place teams in each bracket advance to the Quarterfinal Round in the follow manner:
    - Winner of Bracket A vs 2nd Place Bracket C
    - Winner of Bracket B vs 2nd Place Bracket D
    - Winner of Bracket C vs 2nd Place Bracket A
    - Winner of Bracket D vs 2nd Place Bracket B

h. All Preliminary Round games are scheduled by the teams involved, unless MSYSA intervention is necessary.

i. All Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final Round games are scheduled by the MSYSA State Cup Committee and MSYSA State Office.

**6. Team Eligibility – SPRING State Cup**

a. A team may not participate in the MSYSA State Cup and the MSYSA Junior State Cup within the same seasonal year.

b. The MSYSA State Cup is for current MSYSA-affiliated teams and members.

c. Teams who do not play in a MSYSA-affiliated league can register directly with MSYSA to become eligible to participate in State Cup.

d. All teams must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective league.

e. All team officials and players must have their MSYSA (or National 1) 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.

f. All teams must play in a minimum of a four-team MSYSA affiliated league or MSYSA approved league during the SPRING 2027 season (January 2027 – May 2027). The team must play at least three (3) complete league games with a record of scores and standings during the SPRING 2027 season (January 2027 – May 2027). 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.

**7. Team Official Eligibility**

a. All team officials must be registered with MSYSA, except team officials on National 1 teams may be registered with National 1 only.

b. All team officials must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective league.

**8. Player Eligibility**

a. All players (including club pass card players) must be registered with MSYSA, except players on National 1 teams may be registered with National 1 only.

b. All players (including class pass card players) must be in good standing with MSYSA and their respective league.

c. Players must be properly registered with MSYSA (or National 1) 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. All players (including club pass card players) must be born within the dates corresponding to the age group that they play in State Cup, or any of younger age group dates.

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

| Age Group | Dates of Birth |
|---|---|
| U18/U19 | 8-1-07 to 7-31-09 |
| U17 | 8-1-09 to 7-31-10 |
| U16 | 8-1-10 to 7-31-11 |
| U15 | 8-1-11 to 7-31-12 |
| U14 | 8-1-12 to 7-31-13 |
| U13 | 8-1-13 to 7-31-14 |

g. A player may only play for one team in a State Cup competition within a given seasonal year. If a player is on a State Cup roster when that roster is frozen, the player may not be on a State Cup roster for any other team from any other state association in a State Cup competition 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).
h. 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.
i. A team may not roster any player who was previously rostered during the seasonal year to a MSYSA-affiliated team from another club, unless the player's release and transfer request has been approved by the organizations involved.
j. 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.

**9. State Cup Tournament Rosters & Game Reports**

a. An MSYSA State Cup Roster must have 11 – 22 players.
b. It is the team's responsibility to put ALL desired players, including club pass players, on their State Cup tournament roster.
c. 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.
d. State Cup game reports must be submitted to the referees at the time of check-in.
e. Teams are strongly encouraged to list more than one team official on each game report in case of coach ejections, coaching conflicts, or suspensions.

**10. 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 season or division) within each seasonal year.
c. A club pass card player must appear on a team's frozen State Cup roster.
d. 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.

**11. 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 if the teams and players from the satellite branch are registered in the same GotSport account as the main club.
e. All teams from within a club must have similarly designed uniforms with similar colors, logos, and other acceptable identifying marks.

**12. 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 competitively balanced.
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.

**13. 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.

**14. Preliminary Game Schedule Reporting – SPRING State Cup**

a. Preliminary game schedules (date, time, location, field number) are due to MSYSA no later than 12:00pm on February 22, 2027. The home team (or home team's club) is responsible for putting the mutually agreed upon preliminary game schedule in GotSport.
b. Failure to schedule preliminary games and put the mutually agreed upon schedule in GotSport by the deadline may result in sanctions, including but not limited to, forfeiture of home game status, game forfeiture, and/or fines.

**15. 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 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) AND the Coordinator of MSYSA Assigning (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.

**16. 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 completed 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.

**17. 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.

**18. 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 an acceptable pass card and be listed on the MSYSA State Cup Game Report. All others without an acceptable pass 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 an acceptable pass card. Absolutely no more than three (3) team officials are permitted, even with proper pass cards.
e. For all age groups, players who are on the MSYSA State Cup Roster but not participating may remain in the bench area but may not wear the match jersey. These players are permitted to wear the alternate team jersey.

**19. 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.

**20. 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.

**21. Unmanned Aircraft Systems & Automated Recording Systems**

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. The use of automated recording systems (ex: Veo, Trace) is generally permitted provided the following conditions are met:
    - Equipment is adequately weighted or secured
    - Equipment does not present a danger to others
    - Equipment is set-up at midfield, a team's own technical or spectator area, or any other area specifically requested by MSYSA
    - Video is not publicly or commercially distributed
    - Video is not used to embarrass or humiliated any participant including minor athletes and match officials
d. Any person in violation of this policy may be immediately removed from the field, facility, and/or event.

**22. 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.

**23. 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.

**24. 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 |
|---|---|
| U13-U14 | Two 35 Minute Halves |
| U15-U16 | Two 40 Minute Halves |
| U17-U19 | Two 45 Minute Halves |

d. Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final round games that are tied at the end of regulation time will proceed directly to Penalty Kicks (no overtime periods).
e. 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.

**25. 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.

**26. Substitutions**

a. In all age groups, unlimited substitution is permitted.
b. Substitutions can occur at any stoppage with the referee's approval.

**27. Head Injuries**

a. If a player is suspected of having a concussion, they may be temporarily replaced so they can be evaluated by a qualified health professional if there is one on-site.
b. If the player is cleared, they may return to the match, and the temporary substitute player may come off.

c. For all Quarterfinal, Semifinal, and Final games, and any preliminary game with a qualified health professional on-site - If a coach seeks to allow a player to re-enter the game who has been removed from the game for evaluation by a qualified health professional and who not yet received such medical clearance, that coach may be issued a yellow card.

**28. Uniforms**

a. With the exception of the goalkeeper, each player shall wear differently numbered and similarly designed jerseys.
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 or socks, 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 or socks.

**29. Scoring Method**

a. The standings of teams within a bracket are based upon the number of points earned in a preliminary round games. Points shall be awarded as follows:
    - Three points for a win
    - One point for a tie
    - Zero points for a loss

**30. Tie Breaker Criteria**

a. If there are TWO (2) teams tied on points earned during the preliminary round games, advancement shall be determined with the following sequential criteria:
    - Winner of head-to-head
    - Winner of most games
    - Goal difference (maximum of +5 per game)
    - Fewest goals allowed
    - Fair Play (fewest total player/coach dismissals)
    - Double blind draw conducted by the MSYSA State Office (this shall only apply when both teams have earned a position in the round following the preliminary games).
    - Penalty Kicks
b. If there are THREE (3) teams tied on points earned during the preliminary round games, advancement shall be determined with the following sequential criteria:
    - Points earned in head-to-head competition among the tied teams
    - Winner of most matches (all matches)
    - Goal difference in matches among the tied teams
    - Goal difference in all matches (maximum of +5 per game)
    - Fewest goals allowed in matches among the tied teams
    - Fewest goals allowed in all matches
    - Fair Play (fewest total player/coach dismissals)
    - Double blind draw conducted by the MSYSA State Office (this shall only apply when both teams have earned a position in the round following the preliminary games).
    - If a criterion completely breaks the three-team tie, then that criterion determines the final order of finish. However, if a criterion separates just one team, then the remaining two teams still tied will resort to the two-team tie breaker criteria in 30(a) above.
c. If there are FOUR (4) teams tied on points earned during the preliminary round games, advancement shall be determined in accordance with the three-team tie breaker criteria in 30(b) above. If a criterion completely breaks the multi-team tie, then that criterion determines the final order of finish. If a

criterion breaks a portion of the tied teams, then the tiebreaker shall move to 30(a) or 30(b) above – whichever corresponds to the number of teams that remain tied.

**31. 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:
   - Points earned during the preliminary round
   - Winner of head-to-head competition. However, this criterion shall not be used when more than two teams are tied in points.
   - Goal difference (maximum of +5 per game)
   - Fewest goals allowed
   - Fair Play (fewest total player/coach dismissals)
   - 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).
   - Penalty Kicks

b. If more than two teams are tied, 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 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

**32. 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. Any team suspected of manipulating match results may be fined, disqualified, and/or may be required to play additional games in order to advance to the next round(s).
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.

**33. 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 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 National Championship Series or President's Cup game in which the player or coach participates.
f. 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 MSYSA State Cup Chairperson or 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 Violent Conduct: Minimum one game suspension
    - Player Ejection for Serious Foul Play: Minimum one game suspension
    - Player Ejection for Foul & Abusive Language: Minimum one game suspension
    - Player Ejection for Spitting at Opponent: 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. At the discretion of the MSYSA State Office, MSYSA State Cup Chairperson, or State Cup Chair Designee, a player or team official may face additional sanctions beyond the aforementioned *minimum* suspension lengths.
h. MSYSA applies the US Soccer Referee Abuse Policy and Penalty Matrix for incidents regarding misconduct, abuse, and assault against a referee. More information available at https://www.ussoccer.com/rap.
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.

**34. Protests**

a. A protest is a written objection to a match result.
b. A protest may only be filed by a registered team official or club official for one of the teams involved in the match.
c. Misapplication of the Laws of the Game may be a valid basis for a protest.
d. A Referee's judgment may not be a basis for protests.
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 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 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 misconduct by any MSYSA player, coach, or team, including the use of an ineligible player, during any portion of the MSYSA State Cup to the MSYSA Board of Directors or a higher authority for their consideration.

**35. Appeals - General**

a. An appeal is a written request to transfer a decision from one jurisdiction to another for re-examination.
b. All decisions by the MSYSA State Office are final.
c. MSYSA State Office decisions may be appealed to the MSYSA State Cup Chair or State Cup Chair Designee.
d. Appeals may only be filed by a registered team official or club official from a team that was impacted by initial decision.
e. Appeals to the MSYSA State Cup Chair or State Cup Chair Designee must be emailed to StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org within 48 hours of the initial decision from the MSYSA State Office.
f. 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 within one (1) business day. Online payment with a credit card may be permitted upon request.
g. If the appeal is upheld, the bond will be returned. If the appeal is denied, the bond will be forfeited.
h. 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.

**36. Appeal of State Cup Team Application Rejection**

a. The appeal must be emailed to StateCup@michiganyouthsoccer.org within one (1) business day of notification of application rejection.
b. Notification of appeal must include the following:
    - Fee of $250. 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.
    - A written statement describing the specific grounds for the appeal.
    - All information necessary to make a fair and just decision on the appeal.
    - A clear and concise statement of the relief or action sought
    - Copies of all documents relevant to the appeal.

**37. ANY DECISION MADE BY THE MSYSA STATE OFFICE, MSYSA STATE CUP CHAIR, STATE CUP CHAIR 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.**

**38. Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

a. 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.

b. 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.
c. The penalty for violation by player and/or team offiials may be disqualification from the MSYSA State Cup competition.
d. 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

**39. Inclement Weather**

a. See the MSYSA Severe Weather policy as posted on the State Cup pages of www.michiganyouthsoccer.org.
b. Teams that travel to MSYSA State Cup locations do so at their own risk of games being cancelled due to inclement weather.
c. The referee, MSYSA State Cup Chair, and/or State Cup Chair Designee may suspend games when he/she considers the conditions unsafe.
d. 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.
e. 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.
f. 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) 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.

**40. Spirit of the Game**

a. If the US Youth Soccer MSYSA State Cup Chair or the State Cup Chair 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.

**41. 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.

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

| Dates To Remember: | |
|---|---|
| February 1, 2027 at 12:00PM | State Cup Application & Payment Deadline |
| February 4, 2027 at 9:00AM | State Cup Seeding Meeting & Bracketing Meeting (Elite Division) |
| February 22, 2027 at 12:00PM | State Cup Preliminary Game Schedules Due |
| March 12, 2027 – May 7, 2027 | State Cup Roster Freezes (See Rule 2) |
| March 13, 2027 | Preliminary Games Can Begin |
| May 9, 2027 | Preliminary Games Must Be Completed |
| May 21 – 23, 2027 | MSYSA State Cup Quarterfinals & Semifinals |
| June 4 – 6, 2027 | 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. 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.