



Alabama Soccer Association State Cup

"Rules & Procedures"

Updated NOV 2025

As of NOV 2025

I. Tournament Sanction and Officials

The Alabama State Championships is a tournament sanctioned and conducted annually by the Alabama Soccer Association (ASA) for competition among boy's and girl's teams in the 12U through 19U age groups. It is a part of and a qualifying event for ages 13U-19U in the US Youth Soccer Regional and National Championships sanctioned and conducted by US Youth Soccer. In addition to the Rules listed therein, all other applicable ASA rules and US Youth Soccer rules are in force. The ASA State Cup is conducted under the direction of the State Tournament Committee.

Any matters not provided for in this policy shall be decided by the Tournament Committee, and its decisions are final. In order to continue to improve the games, this manual may be updated by the Tournament Committee and redistributed.

II. Eligibility of Teams and Players

- A. **Eligibility.** State Cup competition is open to the teams of any member who are registered and in good standing of the Alabama Soccer Association.
- B. **Team Roster Size and Continuity.** A team may not have more than the maximum number of players allowed by US Youth Soccer. Teams that can have a maximum of 18 players must demonstrate continuity of rosters between the league and National Championships competitions by maintaining a minimum of 9 players common to the roster of both competitions, and teams that can have a maximum of 22 players must demonstrate continuity of rosters between the league and National Championships competitions by maintaining a minimum of 11 players common to the roster of both competitions. A team is limited to five (5) previously rostered players during a seasonal year.
 - i. **Each player has a unique number for the team they are playing on** -no duplicate numbers within a team
 - ii. **Numbers are permanent to the uniform** -no tape is allowed
 - iii. **State Cup Committee has final say on uniform and any changes to numbers after roster freeze date.**
- C. **Age Group Entered.** A team must enter the competition in the age group corresponding to the age of its oldest player. Age group should be consistent with competition in ASL or US Youth approved league, unless exception previously approved by the State Cup Committee or ASA Advisory Committee.
- D. **Team Rosters.** After the roster is frozen:
 - 1. No player changes are allowed (no "adds" or transfers).

2. A team and its players shall be considered to have competed in the State Cup competition for that seasonal year, whether or not the team or players actually play in a State Cup game.
3. Teams and players may compete in only one (1) State Cup competition in a seasonal year.
4. Bench Personnel may be added to rosters for game with current USYS card with a maximum of four on the bench.

E. Game

Rosters

Each team must provide a Game Day Roster for each match. If the game day roster has a maximum of 22 players then the game day roster shall reflect a maximum of 18 eligible players and a minimum of 7 players. Each coach/manager will elect to scratch the players who will not be participating in a given match. Every eligible player on the game day roster is eligible for participation until struck and can be different from game to game

F. Roster Changes.

1. All transfers must be completed prior to the published State Cup roster freeze date in order for a player to be eligible for State Cup.

Transfers are governed by all applicable rules of US Youth Soccer and ASA. It is the responsibility of the coach and/or team official that has changed its roster to ensure that the ASA or their representative verifies the change.

- G. **Eligibility Rule Violations.** Violations of player or team eligibility rules will result in the forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible team or player has participated. Any coach or team official found to have rostered an ineligible player is, together with the team, ineligible to compete further in State Cup competition in the current year.

III. Competition Fines, Deadlines/Withdrawals, & Forfeits

- A. Each team participating in the State Cup agrees that any fines according to the rules and decisions of the State Cup Committee will be paid before the team's next game. If the team does not have another game, it must be paid before the club's next match in ASA. All fines will be posted on the club account in Gotsport. A team may be fined for the following:
 - A team's failure to be ready to play at the scheduled time plus the grace period of any game.
 - A team's failure to participate in the entire awards ceremony if that team is a participant in the championship game.
 - A team forfeits any match.

- A team that withdraws from the state cup after the deadline to withdraw as set by the Tournament committee.
- B. **Deadlines/Withdrawals.** The official application deadline and withdrawal for each season will be published in the ASA Calendar and/or ASA website. A team that withdraws its application at any time after will forfeit its entry fee _____ and _____ bond.
- C. **Forfeits.** A forfeit during the competition shall be considered a withdrawal and subject to the appropriate fines and penalties.
- D. Should a team in round-robin competition forfeit any match, official game scores for all of that team's games shall be recorded as 4-0 losses. A team that forfeits a match will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.
- E. **Summer Regional Events -Commitment Form Required for all A Division teams and top B Division teams for summer events**

- IV. Our team agrees to represent the Alabama Soccer Association should our team qualify to attend the 2026 US Youth Soccer National Championship Series (July 13-23) or the Southeast Presidents Cup (June 19-22) event as either the State Champion or the Finalist. We agree to a non-refundable deposit of \$200 to reserve our spot for 2026 summer events once the team is approved. it will be charged to the team's club account and must be paid by DEC 10 or the next team in line will be offered the spot to attend and must be paid within 48 hours.
- V. Our team agrees to comply with all requirements of our State, Region, and US Youth Soccer National Championship Series and Presidents Cup during the preparations for the event, and while in attendance at the event. Our team realizes that if we agree to advance to either Series and withdraw, Alabama Soccer Association and US Youth Soccer will issue fines and/or sanctions. Any fines and/or sanctions will be issued against your State Association. They will jeopardize the State Association by not being allowed to participate in any US Youth Soccer events in the future. As such, **we accept that any such fines and/or sanctions will be the team's and club's responsibility.**

VI. Scoring & Tiebreakers

A. Scoring/Tiebreakers.

1. For any divisions with round robins, winners of a round robin group will be determined on a point basis as follows:
 - Three (3) points for a win,

- One (1) point for a tie,
- Zero (0) points for a loss.

Tie games will be allowed with no overtime played during the round-robin portion of the tournament.

2. Tiebreakers

In the event teams are tied on the basis of points, the following tiebreakers will be considered in order until the tie is broken:

- Winner of head-to-head competition. (This criterion is not used if more than two teams are tied.)
- Most wins.
- Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD) which is computed as goals for minus goals against with a maximum of 4 NGD per game.
- Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker);
- Team with most goals (maximum of 4 goals per game).
- Kicks from penalty spot per FIFA law.

3. More than Two Teams Tied

- If more than two (2) teams are tied, the sequence will be followed until a team is eliminated. The remaining teams will then restart the sequence at 2B above, until the tie is broken.
- If three teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA Kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw by the tournament committee. The first team drawn will receive the bye; the next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of FIFA Kicks. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in FIFA Kicks to determine the winner. The bye team will be the home team.
- If four teams are still tied after computing the listed tiebreakers and FIFA Kicks have to be taken, there will be a draw conducted by the tournament committee. The first team drawn (home team) will compete against the 2nd team drawn (away team) in the first contest of FIFA Kicks. The third team drawn (home team) will compete against the fourth team (away team) in the second contest. The winners of these two contests will then compete to determine the winner. The winner of first/second draw will be the home team.

4. In elimination, semi- or final-round matches, tie games will not be permitted. Penalties (Penalty Shoot Out), if necessary, will be used to determine a winner in each match.

V. Game Sites

As a condition of acceptance into the competition, applicants must agree to play anywhere they are scheduled within the State of Alabama.

VI. Club or Association and Team Obligations

Pursuant to US Youth Soccer rules, State Cup games take precedence over all other games. State Cup game dates will be published in advance, but due to weather contingencies, these must be regarded as subject to change. Teams should plan to be available every day from the start of the competition until the final match.

VII. Game Officials

- A. Three (3) officials shall be assigned for each State Cup match by a registered Alabama USSF Assignor designated by the State Assignor Coordinator and State Youth Referee Administrator. The Tournament Director shall be responsible for notifying the SYRA of requirements for officials.
- B. Fourth official may be used for all games, as available, and approved by the Assignor.

VIII. Rules of Play

Applicable Documents include:

- FIFA "Laws of the Game" as amended annually
- USYSA National Championship Rules (current revision)
- ASA Constitution and Bylaws
- ASA Annual Calendar
- ASA Policy and Procedures
- ASA State League Guidelines
- ASA General Membership Rules

Except as modified herein, the FIFA Laws of the Game with ASA modifications shall govern all State Cup play.

A. General Rules of Play

Both teams and a maximum of four (4) team officials for each team shall take the same side of the field. Spectators shall take the other side of the field across from their team and should not cross into opponents half of

the field along the sidelines with any disruption or unsportsmanlike behavior or will be asked to leave by their coach, club director, referee or leadership team.

No artificial noisemakers are permitted & home team shall provide the game ball.

Spectators will sit across from their respected team on the opposite sideline on the same half of the field as their team bench. Anyone along the spectators side is a responsibility of the coach, directors, and bench personnel from the team and club. Alabama Soccer Association, US Youth, and US Soccer all have Codes of Conduct and Zero Tolerance policies in place to respect the game environment. Spectators who do not RESPECT the environment will be asked to leave the facility and will not be allowed in the facility for the remainder of competition and may be subject to additional disciplinary action.

The **home** team will wear a light colored jersey. The **visiting** team will wear dark colored jerseys. The team in the incorrect color will have to change. Clothing worn under the uniform must match as a team and not necessarily the color of the uniform.

The home team shall make available on request a copy of these Rules and Procedures for the referee.

B. Pre-Game Procedures

Each team must have in its possession at the game site, and must make available on request of the referee, or a State Cup official, its original, current, approved ASA State Roster and a current year US Youth Soccer Player Pass for each player/coach/manager. All teams entering State Cup are required to have in their possession their US Youth Soccer Player Passes laminated with pictures affixed prior to the first match of the tournament.

Four (4) approved club representatives may be present on the bench. Should representative not be available, the match is forfeited.

C. Grace Period

Games must start when scheduled except:

A fifteen (15) minute grace period is given to each team to present its US Youth Soccer player and coach passes to the referee for inspection. Failure to comply will result in the cancellation of the match by the referee. The Tournament Director will determine if the team shall forfeit the match with no right of appeal.

A fifteen (15) minute grace period is given to a team which cannot field the maximum number of starting players per rules at game time. After fifteen (15) minutes, the game will start provided that the team has at least the minimum number of players required per rules. If less than the minimum number of players are present at the end of the grace period it will result in the cancellation of the match by the referee. The Tournament Director will determine if the team shall forfeit the match with no right of appeal.

D. Game Duration, Penalties, and Ball Requirements

Games shall consist of two halves of equal duration in accordance with the Age Group Specifications appearing below.

In elimination, semi-final and final games, teams will have a 5 minute break to organize procedures to go directly to PENALTY SHOOT OUT. Due to the amount of teams, field availability, and referee availability, we will not have overtime for fall 2025 State Cup. Follow the procedures as directed in IFAB Laws of the Game

13U – 19U age groups use a #5 size ball; 12U shall use a #4 size ball.

E. Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions will be permitted for all age groups. US Youth may have different rules for Regional Championships.

Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee at any stoppage of play.

F. Ejections

If a player or coach is dismissed from any match, the player or coaches' pass and the game report of the incident shall be turned over to the Tournament Committee.

Players or coaches ejected from a State Cup game are prohibited from participation in the next following US Youth Soccer National Championship game, whether it is the next Alabama State Cup match, the first match of Regional competition, or the first Alabama State Cup match of the following seasonal year. (State Cup suspensions are served only in connection with US Youth Soccer National Championship games and have no bearing on league play.) Ejections and cautions issued in connection with State Cup play may be referred to the ASA Tournament Committee for further disciplinary action. The player's pass shall be returned to the

player's coach/manager following the disciplinary period.

Note: Since some coaches coach more than one team, game suspension(s) will apply to the team for which the coach received the ejection.

G. Cautions

Cautions, unlike ejections, do not accumulate nor do they have any effect on a player's eligibility at the next level of play (Region III Championships).

H. Terminated Games

Games terminated due to inclement weather, darkness, or for other reasons (assuming neither team was at fault), even during FIFA penalty kicks, may be re-played in their entirety. If a match is abandoned for cause due to actions of a team, coach or spectators, the Tournament Committee shall determine whether to allow the score at the time of termination to stand, to forfeit the match in favor of the non-offending team, or to replay the match in its entirety. The referee shall report, with explanation, all abandoned games to the Tournament Committee within one hour of the termination. The final decision to replay a game rests with the Tournament Director.

I. Post-Game Procedures

The Game Report will be completed by the referee including cautions and ejections, if any. The completed report must be signed by the referee and assistant referees as well as the team coaches and or managers.

J. Protests

Protest will only be accepted for misapplication of the FIFA rules or misapplication of ASA rules. Protest will not be accepted for Referee Judgment calls. Protest must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Director at the Tournament site, no more than 1 hour after the game with a protest fee of \$250.00 cash. The protest fee will not be refunded regardless of the result of the protest.

