TEXAS SM
EASTER CUP

TOURNAMENT RULES

1. **Rules of Play:** The rules of play shall be the FIFA "Laws of the Game" except as modified by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and South Texas Youth Soccer Association, unless modified by the tournament rules, and in the case of conflict the tournament rules shall take precedence.
    a. **Play Formats**: All games will be played in a 7v7, 9v9 or 11v11 format. For the 7v7 play format there shall be no build-out line.
    b. **Heading:** This rule shall apply to the U9-U11 age groups only. If in the opinion of the referee a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If in the opinion of the referee a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.
2. **Registration and Online Check-In:** Teams must have completed registration and online check-in before playing in the tournament. Registration shall only be deemed to be complete after the team is listed as accepted AND full payment has been received by the tournament organizers. Online check-in shall only be deemed to be complete after the team receives an e-mail from a tournament official confirming that all required documents have been received.
3. **Bracketing:** Whenever possible there will be more one bracket of play for each age group and gender, and the placement of a team in a bracket will primarily be based upon the requested bracket during registration. Where necessary, the tournament organizers will place a team in a different bracket to the one requested – most commonly this would be due to a bracket being full, with the ranking of the teams (or other performance data) being used to fill the bracket. If there are insufficient teams for more than one bracket of play for each age group and gender, the tournament organizers may place all teams of an age group and gender in a single bracket or may combine age groups to form brackets.
4. **Schedule:** After the final schedule is published, no request for changes will be allowed. To minimize game conflicts, coaches with multiple teams should ensure that the name of the listed coach in GotSoccer is IDENTICAL for all of their teams. The tournament organizers will work to minimize coaching conflicts but may not be able to avoid all conflicts. Coaches assigned to a large number teams (3 or more), should consider contacting the tournament organizers to set priorities for their potential game conflicts. For all other scheduling requests, coaches should contact the tournament organizers at least 2 weeks prior to the event – these requests will be considered on a case by case basis, with priority being given to reducing coaching conflicts in the schedule.

5. **Roster Limits:** Roster limits are set based on the format of play:
    a. 7v7, U9-U10: Maximum twelve (12) players
    b. 9v9, U11-U12: Maximum sixteen (16) players
    c. 11v11, U13-U19, Maximum twenty-two (22) players. NOTE: A maximum of 18 players may be in uniform and participate in any game.
6. **Player Eligibility:** All players must be listed on the official team roster used to complete online check-in, and all player cards must be valid for the seasonal year. All player cards must be issued by a youth soccer association affiliated with US Soccer. Player cards must be available for inspection by a referee or a tournament official at any time during the tournament. A player may only play for one (1) team throughout this tournament.
    a. **Guest Players:** There is no limit on the number of guest players allowed. To be eligible, guest players must (1) be listed on the official team roster and (2) have provided a valid player card and a medical release during online team check-in. Tournament player cards for guest players, issued by a youth soccer association affiliated with US Soccer, are valid for use in the tournament.
    b. **Illegal player:** A team that uses an illegal player, whether as player on the field, or as a substitute in uniform on the bench, shall be disqualified from the tournament and forfeit ALL games. The tournament director shall make the final determination in any investigation regarding the suspected use if an illegal player. Any player that is not on the official team roster for the tournament, or that is found to be impersonating a player that is on the official team roster, or that is found to be older than the age group of the team, is defined as an illegal player.
7. **Team Officials:** All team officials must have an adult participation pass, or proof of an equivalent background check, to be allowed on the team side of the field, and it must be shown to the referee upon request. A maximum of four (4) team officials may be on the team side of the field.
8. **Spectators**: There shall be a team side and a spectator side of the field. The team coach, or other designated team official, is responsible for making sure that the spectators of their team are on the correct side of the field, and for controlling their behavior. A referee may stop or abandon a game if the behavior of the spectators cannot be controlled and the game may be awarded by forfeit to the opposing team.
9. **Game Lengths:** Game times are set by the play format and age group:
    a. 7v7, U9-U10: 20 minutes per half
    b. 9v9, U11-U12: 25 minutes per half
    c. 11v11, U13-U15: 30 minutes per half
    d. 11v11, U16-U19: 35 minutes per half
    e. The half time break for all age groups will be 5-minutes
    f. A game will be deemed to be officially completed if at least the full first half has been played and tournament play is suspended for any reason. The score at the time of the stoppage will be the final score.
10. **Water Breaks:** Water breaks may be mandated by the tournament director, depending upon weather conditions, or may also be agreed by coaches from teams and the referee prior to the start of a game. The referee shall manage any mandated or agreed water breaks, which shall be taken in both halves of the game, and shall be of about 2 minutes duration, during which time the game clock CONTINUE to run.

11. **Scoring:** The following scoring system will be used for the tournament:
    a. Six (6) points for a win
    b. Three (3) points for a tie
    c. Zero (0) points for a loss
    d. One (1) bonus point per goal scored by each team, with a maximum of three (3) goal points per game
    e. One (1) bonus point for a shutout.
    f. A forfeit is scored as 3-0, and ten (10) points are awarded.
12. **Advancement Criteria:** The advancement of teams to a final will be decided by the results of the qualifying games for the respective bracket:
    a. A bracket of four (4) teams will be played as a single group in a round robin format, with three (3) games per team, and the team accumulating the most points being declared the champion. There is no advancement to a final for a bracket of four (4) teams.
    b. A bracket of five (5) teams will be played as a single group in a round robin format, with four (4) games per team, and the team accumulating the most points being declared the champion. There is no advancement to a final for a bracket of five (5) teams.
    c. A bracket of six (6) teams will be played as two (2) groups of three (3) teams in a cross-over format, with three (3) games per team, each playing the three (3) teams in the other group, and the two (2) teams accumulating the most points advancing to the final.
    d. A bracket of eight (8) teams will be played as two (2) groups of four (4) teams in a round robin format (3 games per team), with the winner of each group advancing to the final.
    e. NOTE: Any team that forfeits any game during the tournament will not be eligible to advance to a final, nor will they be eligible to be declared the champion.
13. **Tie-Breakers:** Tie breakers shall not be used in qualifying games, and teams shall be awarded the points associated with the score of the tied game. Tie breakers shall be used to determine which teams advance to a final, as required, if teams finish qualifying play with an equal number of points and not all of the teams can advance. The following sequence of tie breakers shall be used to determine the advancing team(s):
    a. Result of head to head game - not used if more than two (2) teams are tied
    b. Goal difference - total goals for, minus total goals against, with no limit on goals scored or conceded per game.
    c. Total goals against – with no limit on goals conceded per game.
    d. FIFA penalty shoot-out

    For finals only, ties shall be broken by a FIFA penalty shoot-out, immediately after regulation time (no overtime periods). Only players on the field at the end of regulation time may participate in the penalty shoot-out.
14. **Referees:** USSF referees shall be assigned to all games, with a three (3) referee crew being used for all 11v11 games and 9v9 finals. All other games will use a single center referee. All referee decisions are final: no protests are permitted. Referees are required to include on the official game report all disciplinary actions taken before, during, or after a game, and to record details of any player removed from play due to a suspected concussion. The referee shall submit the official game report, signed by both teams, to the tournament office.
15. **Reporting Scores:** Online and telephone reporting of scores will be enabled so that coaches can report scores – the event details and method of reporting will be distributed by the tournament

director to the coaches. The referee shall submit the official game report, signed by both teams, to the tournament office.

16. **Awards:** First and second place teams in each bracket will receive awards.
17. **Uniforms:** All players must wear a team uniform of a like color, that is distinguishable from the uniform of the opposing team and the referee. Each team should have an alternative color jersey, which may be used when there is color conflict with the opposing team. The team designated as the home team should change their jersey color, if deemed necessary by the referee. Each player shall have an assigned number, which is listed on the official roster, and shall wear a jersey with that number. Each player on a team shall have a different assigned number. Any use of an alternative number must be reported to, and approved by, the referee prior to the start of a game.
18. **Player Equipment:** A referee, or a tournament official, may inspect a player prior to a game, or at any time when there is concern for the safety of the player. The player must meet the following requirements:
    a. All players must wear suitable shin guards
    b. All players must wear suitable cleats
    c. No casts are allowed
    d. No jewelry of any kind may be worn
19. **Players Required to Play:** Games may only start, or continue, if the minimum requirement for players is met. The required players for each play format are as follows:
    a. 7v7, U9-U10: minimum 5 players
    b. 9v9, U11-U12: minimum 6 players
    c. 11v11, U13-U19: minimum 7 players
20. **Scheduled Game:** Teams should arrive at their assigned field and be ready for inspection by a referee or tournament official at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. All games start at the time shown on the schedule. A FORFEIT may be awarded by the referee if at least one (1) team is not ready to play at the scheduled time.
21. **Home Team:** The team designated as the home team shall supply the game ball and shall choose which half of the field to use for the start of the game.
22. **Substitutions**: Unlimited substitutions are allowed, but all substitutions require the permission of the referee. Substitutions are allowed
    a. Prior to a throw-in, by team in possession (if team in possession substitutes, opposing team can also substitute)
    b. Prior to a goal kick, by either team
    c. After a goal is scored, by either team
    d. After a stoppage due to an injury (only injured player can be substituted)
    e. After a player is cautioned (only cautioned player can be substituted)
    f. At half time, by either team
    g. During water breaks, by either team
23. **Yellow and Red Cards:** Any player that receives a red card (a direct red or a second yellow card) is suspended for at least the next game. If the direct red card is issued for violent conduct, then the player is suspended for all remaining games in the tournament. Any player that receives yellow cards in two (2) different games is suspended for the next game. Any player that receives red cards in two (2) different games is suspended for all remaining games in the tournament. All cases of serious misconduct will be reported to the appropriate governing soccer association.

24. **Concussion Protocol:** If in the opinion of the referee (or assistant referee), a player has suffered a head injury or possible concussion, the match must be stopped IMMEDIATELY. If able to leave the field on their own, the injured player must be escorted to their coach/trainer, who must be told that the player cannot return for the duration of the game. If a coach/trainer is brought onto the field because the player is incapacitated, the referee must still notify the coach/trainer that the player cannot return to the game. It is the responsibility of the coach/trainer and the player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to seek medical attention. The player with the suspected concussion will be suspended from play until tournament officials receive written clearance form a licensed physician stating that the player can return to play. The referee crew must ensure, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES or due to appeals from team officials, that the impacted player is NOT allowed to return to the game. The only other responsibility of the referee is to note the suspected concussion on the game report, identifying the impacted player.
25. **Inclement Weather:** The tournament director shall make all decisions related to playability of the fields, stoppages in play due to the proximity of lightning, restarting play, canceling play for the day, canceling the event, or any other issue related to the operation of the event. The judgement of the tournament director is final. All inclement weather announcements will be updated on the SCHEDULE web page of the tournament. Whenever possible, attempts will be made to complete the tournament, if necessary by re-scheduling games, reducing length of games, eliminating finals, and any other means that are deemed practical by the tournament director within the tournament time constraints.
26. **Refunds:** A team withdrawing from the tournament after being accepted shall forfeit its entry fee. In the event of inclement weather, the tournament director has the authority to restructure or cancel the tournament. It will not be rescheduled for another date and no refunds will be issued once play has begun. If the tournament is cancelled prior to the start of play, a refund less expenses will be distributed.
27. **Not Covered:** The tournament director shall decide all matters not explicitly covered by the rules that need to be addressed during the tournament. The judgement of the tournament director is final.