

Club Pass and Uniforms: National Championships Policy Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQs”): Rules 101, 221, 224, and 241

Background: The US Youth Soccer National Council at its meeting on July 30, 2011, amended the National Championships Policy to provide for a player club pass for the National Championships competitions and additional provisions about player and team official uniforms and other outerwear at games.

The concept of having a player club pass for the National Championships competitions was recommended to the Board of Directors by the US Youth Soccer Coaching Committee and many State Association directors of coaching. The changes provide that a club pass is the US Youth Soccer member pass issued to a player of a club that is registered through a club to a State Association and may be used to place the player on the roster of any team of that club competing in the National Championships competitions at the State Association, regional, and national levels of the competitions.

FAQs:

1. What is the objective of the “club pass”?

The “club pass” concept’s core objective is to provide clubs and coaches with the flexibility to move players from team to team in their own club as necessary for the National Championship Series (“NCS”), based on player development and team needs.

2. When do the changes go into effect?

All changes apply to the National Championships competitions beginning in the 2011-2012 seasonal year.

3. Will the club pass allow a player in our club in one State Association play for our club in the State Cup for that club in another State Association?

No. Clause (3) of Rule 101, defining “club”, specifically states that the club must be a member of a State Association. Further, Section 1(1) of Rule 221 requires that a team must be comprised of properly registered and rostered youth players (as defined by US Youth Soccer). The registration requirement is defined by the US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules, Rule 201, Section 1: A player is required to register in the State Association in which he or she resides or attends boarding school. Clause (4) of Rule 101, defining “club pass”, incorporates the definition of club and requires that the pass is to be issued to only players of the club as provided by the Policy. Also, keep in mind that the definition of “select team” (former clause (14), renumbered as clause (16)) would further preclude the entry of an all-star type of team.

A player of another club, whether that club is a member of a soccer organization that has any clubs in another State Association or not, cannot use the club pass for a team that is a team of another club. For example, suppose a soccer organization has clubs in California-North, Washington, and Oregon, and the soccer organization calls itself the Premier Soccer Club in each of these State Associations. Player A is registered through the Premier Soccer Club in California-North and has a club pass from the Premier Soccer Club in California-North. A club pass issued to Player A would only be valid if used for a team in the Premier Soccer Club in California-North. If Player A wanted to play Cup on the team of another club in California-North, Washington, or Oregon, the club pass of Player A could not be used. For Player A to play on the team of another club in California-North, the player would have to do so as a previously rostered player, subject to the previously rostered player requirements. If Player A wanted to play on the team of a club in Washington or Oregon, the player is required, by Section 2 of Rule 201 of the US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules, to get the permission of the State Association where the player is registered (California-North in the example) and permission of the other State Association where the player wants to play (Washington or Oregon, as the case may be).

4. Is a team that qualifies for State Cup still required to have players from its league roster?

Yes. The “continuity of roster” requirement remains an element of team qualification for the NCS, Rule 221, Section 1(5) requires that the team competing in the NCS must have at least 9 players common to the roster that the team uses in the league to qualify for Cup as required by clause (4) of this same section. The “continuity of roster” requirement with the team’s league roster applies at each level of the competition, i.e. State Cup, Regional Championships, and National Championships Finals.

5. Do the 9 players common to the league roster have to be the same 9 players at all levels of the competition?

No. Rule 221, Section 1 (5), states that a team must “maintain a minimum of 9 players common to the roster” from league play to every level of the National Championships competitions. This provision does not specify which 9 players, only that the roster at each level of the competitions must have at least 9 players common to the league roster. Therefore, if the team has only 9 players from its league roster at each level of the competitions, then the team must have those 9 players on its roster at each level. However, if a team has more than 9 players from its league roster for its roster for the competitions, then the team only needs to have at least 9 of those players on its roster at each level of the competitions.

6. Is any player in my club eligible for a National Championships roster?

Yes. Rule 221, Section 2 (a)(1), of the Policy provides that the club may issue a club pass to a US Youth Soccer registered player in the club and opens the National Championships roster of the team to any player in the club that is eligible and has a club pass as long as the roster meets the minimum 9-player “continuity of roster” rule.

7. Can I add players to my roster from outside my club?

Yes. Players can be added from outside the club only at the State Cup level of the competitions. Teams may add players from another club and issue a club pass to that player only at the State Association level of the competition and with permission of the club's State Association. A National Championships roster for State Cup may not have more than 5 previously rostered players, players who have been issued a club pass by another club, at any time during the State Cup competition.

8. Do players from a team in my club count as “previously rostered” players?

No. Only players who have been issued a club pass by a club, other than your own, are considered previously rostered as per Rule 221, Section 2 (2)(A) and (B). The provision only applies (1) to players not having club passes, and (2) at the State Association level of the NCS. Therefore, once the team moves to the next level of the NCS competitions--the Regional Championships and above-- additional players from outside the club are not allowed to be added to an NCS roster.

9. In the past, a player was assigned to a roster as soon as the player participated for the team. Is that still the case?

No. The changes to Rule 221, Section 4, struck out the provision about when a player is rostered to a team. This clause is no longer needed as previously existing provisions and recent changes address when a player considered to be rostered. Rule 221, Section 2 (a)(3) retains the provision that a player on a school team whose school program is administered by a State Association is not considered a rostered player.

10. Can a player be removed from a team involuntarily?

Yes. Clubs are now provided the flexibility to manage player movement between teams for the NCS as provided by the “club pass” provisions in the Policy as expressed in Rule 221, Section 2 (b). The club can also remove a player from a team if the player has violated the bylaws, policies, or requirements of the Federation, US Youth Soccer, the State Association, or the member of the State Association through whom the player is registered. The player may then be replaced on the roster as allowed by the Policy.

11. Is it possible that parents may get upset if players are moved from team to team?

It is up to each club how and when to use the club pass for the purposes of the NCS. Clubs can use their discretion in applying the club pass. It is up to the club on how to implement the added flexibility of a club pass consistent with State Association requirements.

12. What are the roster requirements for the National Championships Series?

Rosters are critical to the management of player and team eligibility for the NCS and the changes to Rule 221, Section 3 provide the flexibility to easily and properly manage eligibility

requirements for the competition. A significant change is all teams, regardless of age group, may have up to 22 players, remembering that the Policy applies to the Under 14 through Under 19 age groups as defined in Rule 101(9). In addition, the changes provide for 3 rosters, instead of the current 2 rosters: (1) the team roster, (2) the new National Championships roster, and (3) the game roster, as explained as follows:

- (1) Every team roster must always have at least 9 registered players on the roster. So if a team has only 9 registered players on its roster, those 9 players must be players on the team's league roster.
- (2) The National Championships roster shall be based on the team roster approved at the State Association level and can have up to 22 players at any age group and at all levels of the competitions.
- (3) Game rosters of up to 18 and at least 7 players are required and submitted to the competition authority at the State Association and Regional Championships at a time determined by that authority, and at least 60 minutes prior to the start of the game for the National Championships Finals.

13. Are NCS rosters still required to be submitted by a certain time?

Yes. The rosters must be submitted by certain dates for each level of the competitions but with greater flexibility to allow for roster changes. Rule 221, Section 6, provides the timeline for the submission of the National Championships roster at each level of the competition: at the State Association level, no earlier than 14 days prior to the beginning of the team's age group competition, as is currently provided by the Policy and, at the regional and national levels, no later than 7 days prior to the beginning of the team's age group competition.

14. How and when can I change players on my NCS roster?

The changes to the Policy add an entirely new Section 7 to Rule 221. The new Section 7 allows for the rostering of a player from the team's club that was not on that team's National Championship roster at the prior level. Under subsection (a) of the section, the additions to the team's National Championships roster may occur at the Regional or National Championships levels, or both. However, the only players the team may add to its roster at those levels are eligible players of the club. Subsection (b) of the section provides that a player may only be rostered to one team at each level of the NCS. Players may move between teams in a club at each level of the competition but can never be on more than one National Championship roster for that level as is provided in Rule 224 explained below in #15.

15. Can my team play in more than one age group?

No. Rule 221, Section 8 (formerly Section 7 re-designated), is retained. The rule limits a team to only one age group competition each seasonal year. This means a team may not play in one age group at the State Association level and then change its age group at the regional or national level. For example, a U-15 team of a club competes and is eliminated in a State Cup competition

in the fall; that team may not enter another State Cup in a different age group during the same seasonal year. However, the **players on the team** that has been eliminated are now eligible to be rostered to another team in the club in compliance with the provisions of the Policy.

16. Can a player play on more than one team in a club in National Championships competitions?

Yes. The following restrictions apply: The amendments to Rule 224, Section 2, require that a player may be on only one NCS roster at each level of the competition. Again, reinforcing the requirements found in Rule 221, new Section 7 provides that a player may only appear on one roster for each level of the NCS, and that player may not play for another team as long as the team remains in the competitions. Once the player's team is eliminated from any level of the competitions, the player then becomes eligible for another team in the club should the player meet all the necessary requirements, i.e. age, club pass, etc. The changes allow for flexibility and left all judgment to the club and its coaches and managers on whether or not players, whose teams have been eliminated, should be added to still competing teams. It is up to each club, consistent with State Association requirements, to manage the dynamics of change within its still competing team or teams in the best interest of player and team development as the club and its coaches and managers see fit. Any matters that may arise with players, parents, guardians, or other adults regarding player movement within the scope of the Policy are the sole responsibility of the club.

17. How is the NCS roster for State Cup determined?

Rule 224, Section 4, designates that the first National Championships roster on which the player is rostered at each level of the National Championships competitions, and that roster is submitted to the team's State Association as required by the State Association, is the State Cup roster for that player. The club will determine when a player is placed on a State Cup roster. Once a player is rostered for the Cup, the player is not be allowed to move within his or her club until the player's team is eliminated from the competition and then only for the next level of the NCS.

18. Will the US Youth Soccer member pass show a player's club?

Yes. The changes to Rule 241, Section 1, require that the member pass is the club pass that identifies the club of the player, whether by club name or other appropriate means.

19. Are there any other changes that I should be aware of?

Yes. Rule 241, Section 3 (a), was changed to clarify uniform requirements. Section 3 has also been changed by adding a new subsection (e). The new subsection requires that, at every level of the NCS competitions, all players and team officials participating in a game of the competitions may only have on their outerwear (uniforms, sweat suits, etc.) a name, logo, or other identifying mark of a youth soccer organization that is US Youth Soccer, a State Association or other member of US Youth Soccer, a member of a State Association, or a member of a member of a State Association. Any name, logo, or other identifying mark of any other youth soccer

organization must be removed, replaced, or covered up; otherwise the player or team official may not remain at the game site.