

# **UNITED STATES SOCCER FEDERATION**

## **RULES CHECKLIST FOR TOURNAMENTS**

For a tournament held by a United States Soccer Federation member that includes foreign teams, the tournament rules are submitted to either FIFA or CONCACAF for approval. The following checklist is being provided to ensure that your tournament rules all requirements and therefore will also provide expeditious consideration and approval. The items included in the list are requirements that must be in the tournament rules unless otherwise stated.

### **I. TOURNAMENT NAME**

Place the name of the tournament at the top of the Regulations and number the pages.

### **II. TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS**

Provide the address, phone numbers and name of contact person.

### **III. REGISTRATION AND TEAM ELIGIBILITY**

1. Check-in - Specify where, with whom, and when a team is required to register with the tournament upon arrival in the venue. (Example - on arrival at the tournament headquarters, 30 minutes before each game, at a specified location, at the team's game field, with a specific individual.)
2. Requirements - Specify what a team is required to provide when checking into the tournament. (Example - include tournament roster, player passes, insurance forms, parental permission slips, team roster, and travel permission form.)
  - A. TEAMS FROM THE UNITED STATES – For teams from the United States:
    1. The Players must present picture identification cards issued by the team's Federation Organization Member (USYS, AYSO, other)
    2. Teams must provide proof of approval of the team's participation from the team's Federation Organization Member.
    3. Teams from outside the State Association where the tournament is located must provide proof of permission to travel.
  - B. FOREIGN TEAMS – For a team coming from a CONCACAF nation:
    1. Players must present passports at registration or, if from a nation that the United States does not require a passport, proof of entry into the United States that is required by the United States.
    2. Teams are required to have and present player picture identification cards.
    3. Tournament rules must require that the team have a completed form from its Provincial or National Association approving the team's participation in the tournament.

#### **IV. PLAYER AGE AND ELIGIBILITY – Specify:**

1. The age groups and gender of the teams eligible to participate in the tournament and the maximum number of players permitted on the roster for each age group and gender.
2. If guest players are permitted. If so, specify the number permitted and the eligibility requirements. These may vary by age group and gender.

#### **V. TEAMS – Specify:**

1. How the home and away teams will be determined (Example – top team in the bracket, flip coin, etc.).
2. How uniform color conflicts will be resolved (Example – both teams must bring two sets of uniforms to each game, however if the referee determines there is a conflict, the home team will be required to change).
3. If there are rules about where teams and spectators are to be located (Example – the tournament director will designate which side of the field will be for the teams and which side will be for the spectators. No persons are permitted behind the goals).

#### **VI. PLAYER CREDENTIALS AND UNIFORMS – State that:**

1. Player picture identification cards are to be present and available at all matches.
2. Identification cards are required to be checked by the referee prior to each match
3. The shirt number of each player must be the same as the player's shirt number on the daily match report or roster. If the numbers are not the same, the referee is not to allow the player to take part in the match until the numbers are the same (Examples –The player changing his or her shirt, or the daily match report being changed).

#### **VII. LAWS OF THE GAME**

1. All matches must be played in accordance with *FIFA Laws of the Game*, except as specifically modified as follows in the tournament rules:
2. Specify any modifications to the Laws of the Game which your tournament will use, as allowed under “Modifications - Notes on the Laws of the Game” (Introduction section before the FIFA Laws of the Game), including:
  - a. Match length - Specify match length for each round and age group, including overtime periods (if any).

b. Substitution -The following substitution rules must be included:

1). SUBSTITUTION TIME

A player may be substituted on at a stoppage of play with the permission of the referee.

NOTE: Tournament regulations may limit when substitutions may be made by specifying specific stoppages in play when substitutions can be made (Example - At goal kicks and corner kicks, on your team's throw-ins, when a player is cautioned); otherwise substitutions may be made at any stoppage only with the permission of the referee.

2). SUBSTITUTION AGE LIMITS

1. If the age group is 15 & under, free substitution is allowed.
2. For age groups 16 years and older, free substitution is allowed providing the tournament is not an official competition (but a friendly club tournament) and the age category does not include matches between national teams of CONCACAF member countries. If it does include national teams, then up to six substitutions are allowed.

c. Player Equipment – Specify what is permitted and not permitted.

A. Shin guards – Required for all players (no exceptions).

B. Casts (Example – No hard casts are permitted. Soft casts are permitted with the permission of the referee.)

NOTE: You may require approval by a Tournament doctor as well but the ultimate authority is the referee.

**VIII. TOURNAMENT AND MATCH SCHEDULES – Specify:**

1. Tournament Format – By age group, whether the first round is a round robin or single elimination. If it is a round robin, specify how many teams qualify from each group for the succeeding rounds and what the format is for those succeeding rounds (Example – 2 teams in each bracket in an age group qualify for the semifinals with the winner of bracket A playing the winner of bracket B and vice versa, and the 2 winning semifinalists playing in the final match). If all groups are the same, so state.
2. Match Schedules – The minimum number of matches a team will play and the number of matches being played on each day. If the same for all groups, so state.
3. Procedures for Determining a Winner – The procedures for deciding matches that require a winner and specify which matches those are (Example, semifinals and finals). If overtime periods are used, overtime periods must be played to completion. “Golden goal” and “Silver goal” are no longer allowed.

4. Referees – That all matches must use referees certified by the Federation.
5. Match Delays, Suspensions, Cancellations – What the effect is to the match schedule if there are weather or other situations that result in a delay, suspension, or cancellation of play. Specify who makes that decision and what the outcome will be.
6. Refund Policy – State the policy of the tournament in regard to the refund of entry fees for cancellations, including if there is a refund and, if so, when, where, how, and how much.

**IX. FORFEITS – Specify:**

1. What constitutes a forfeiture (Example, a team not arriving by or within so many minutes of the scheduled starting time for a match or not having the minimum number of players present).
2. The minimum number of players required to start play.
3. Whether a team that forfeits a match will be permitted to proceed in the tournament to the playoff rounds.
4. The result for a forfeited match and how it impacts the standings (Example 3-0., depends on your Standings structure)

**X. STANDINGS AND TIE-BREAKERS**

1. Specify the system to be used in determining standings. (Examples include points from the results of matches such as points for a win, loss, and tie, bonus points for goals scored up to a certain number, results of forfeited matches, or loss of points for disciplinary action (e.g., coach and player red cards).
2. List the tie-breaker procedures to be used to decide the placement in the standings of teams that are tied. Recommended methods include::
  - a. Points earned from matches won or tied;
  - b. Head-to-head competition of the tied teams;
  - c. Goal difference;
  - d. Goals scored;
  - e. Goals allowed;
  - f. Kicks from the penalty spot;
  - g. Fair play scores;
  - h. A drawing by lots.

**XI. MATCH AND SCORE REPORTING – Specify:**

1. Who is responsible for reporting the match results, cautions, and ejection to the tournament headquarters (Examples - coaches, referees, field marshals, or any combination).

2. The procedure for reporting the match results, cautions, and ejections.  
(Examples - the home team coach is to make the report; both coaches must sign a scorecard; the home team or field marshall must submit the card to the tournament headquarters immediately or within one hour).

## **XII. PROTESTS & DISPUTES – Specify:**

1. Protests – What, if any, protests are permitted, the procedures to be followed, if any protest fees are required and if they are refunded if the protest is upheld.
2. Disputes – How disputes for non-referee decisions are handled (Example – player eligibility issues or disputes over tournament rules) and by whom.
3. The committee or other entity organized at the tournament to consider and hear protests and disputes.
4. The procedures and entity involved in a protest or dispute must provide quick due process.
5. The rules must state that: (1) decisions by referees may not be appealed, and (2) decisions by the entity deciding a protest or dispute are final and may not be appealed

## **XIII. CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE – Specify:**

1. Team and Spectator Conduct - The conduct that is expected from the teams (Example - a code of conduct) and what action will be taken for misconduct, including expulsion from the tournament.
2. General Rules - What is NOT permitted (Examples - animals, alcoholic beverages, smoking, verbal abuse of anyone).
3. Ejections - That a player or coach sent off during a match is not allowed to play or coach in the next match. State that the tournament committee may take additional disciplinary action against a team or individual for serious offenses, including suspension from the remainder of the tournament and non-eligibility for future tournaments of that tournament committee. Detail whether the passes for the player or coach are to be held by the tournament director until the suspensions are served. Specify where the suspended players and coaches may be during matches (Example – Coaches may be located on the spectators side of the field but may not coach or communicate with the team in any manner; players may sit with the team but may not be in uniform).
4. Accumulation of Yellow Cards - If there are disciplinary procedures for accumulated yellow cards received in different matches during the tournament and if so what they are. (Example - a player who accumulates 2 or 3 yellow cards in different matches is suspended for one match.

5. Report of Disciplinary Action:

- A. For United States teams, state the procedure for notifying the Federation Organization Member of that team of disciplinary action taken or required.
- B. For CONCACAF teams, specify that the tournament committee will notify the US Soccer Federation of disciplinary action taken, and that the Federation will transmit the disciplinary action taken or required to that team's provincial or national association.

**XIV. GAME BALLS** – Specify who is responsible for supplying the game balls (Example – Tournament, home team away team, both teams). If the teams are responsible, then list any criteria and specifications (Example – “FIFA Approved”, “FIFA Inspected”, etc.).