Player Pathway Cup
Tournament Rules

CLASSIFICATION AND AGE DIVISIONS: The tournament is presented by PDF San Antonio Youth Soccer League and is designated as a US Club Soccer-sanctioned event (subject to confirmation of final sanctioning approval). Competition is open to eligible U7–U12 boys' and girls' teams in the advertised divisions. U10 teams entered in 9v9 will play under the tournament's modified U11-U12-style 9v9 rules, including the U10 heading restriction. Unless modified below, the applicable current IFAB Laws of the Game govern.

TEAM REGISTRATION: Team registration and payment must be done through GotSport. Teams that do not pay will be removed from the tournament. Once a team is accepted and scheduled for games, no refunds will be given. All teams must have all players on the roster, including a photo for each player. All players must be officially registered through USYS, US CLUB, USSSA, or other insurance to be eligible for play.

TEAM ENTRY FEES: All team entry fees must be paid by credit card. Cash payments are not accepted. The "pay by check" option is available only to allow teams to complete registration and add their credit card information at a later time. For clubs registering 10 or more teams who prefer to receive a single consolidated invoice for payment, please communicate this to the Tournament Director.

ROSTER REQUIREMENTS

All players, including Club Pass and Guest Players, must be added to the GotSport Tournament Event Roster. This will serve as your tournament roster and must list all players, guest players, and club pass players participating in the tournament.

A player may only participate with **one (1) club** during the tournament and must be listed on the official GotSport Tournament Event Roster for each team on which they participate.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY – MULTIPLE TEAM PARTICIPATION: A player may only participate with **one (1) club** during the tournament and must be listed on the official GotSport Tournament Event Roster for each team on which they participate. Players may be listed on a maximum of two (2) team rosters during the tournament, provided the following conditions are met:

1. A player may participate on their age-appropriate team and one additional team in an older age division.
2. Players are not permitted to play on two teams within the same age division.
3. Players are not permitted to play down into a younger age division.
4. Players must be listed on the official GotSport Tournament Event Roster for both teams before the roster freeze deadline.
5. Players must meet all applicable registration, age-verification, and eligibility requirements.
6. Teams are responsible for managing any scheduling conflicts resulting from players participating on two teams. Tournament schedules will not be adjusted to accommodate individual player conflicts.

Violation: Any team using an ineligible player will forfeit the match in which the player participated, subject to review by the Tournament Director.

Club Directors & Registrars are responsible for ensuring player eligibility and managing scheduling conflicts associated with players participating on multiple teams.

All roster players must have:

- A photo uploaded
- A jersey number assigned
- Birth Certificates & Player IDs
    - Teams should have birth certificates and player IDs available in case of any questions or age-verification issues.

SIMPLE CHECK-IN

Before the roster freeze communicated by the Tournament Director through GotSport, review the event roster and game card for accuracy. Official club rosters do not need to be uploaded as part of routine check-in. Only players listed on the approved GotSport Event Roster and printed on the official game card are eligible. The exact roster-freeze deadline will be published in GotSport.

All players must have a photo and jersey # on the roster.

KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN CASE OF ANY QUESTIONS ON AGE VERIFICATION

a) A **copy of your official roster** signed by your club registrar. Guest Players should be written in at the bottom. The roster must include the name, date of birth, and ID numbers for all players.

b) **Virtual player ID cards** for every rostered player, including guest and club-pass players, must be available for inspection upon request. A consolidated PDF may be

provided to tournament headquarters if requested; routine advance upload is not required unless separately announced. Players without acceptable eligibility documentation may not participate until verified by tournament headquarters.

c) For players U10 and below, a **birth certificate**, or a letter from the club registrar verifying that your players are registered for the current seasonal year. The letter from your registrar will need to include the team's name, player names, dates of birth, and player ID numbers.

COACH CREDENTIAL CHECK: Every sideline coach must appear on the approved team roster and possess current, applicable background-screening and SafeSport/child-safety credentials required by the team's registering organization and the event sanctioning body. Tournament officials may request verification.

NO PLAYER WRITE-INS ON GAME CARD: Player write-ins are not allowed on the game card. Unapproved write-ins will automatically result in a forfeit for the offending team, regardless of the game outcome or the team's standing in the tournament.

OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS: Once your team registers for the tournament, please follow the instructions on the website. If the tournament has a hotel selected or travel partner, please follow the rules provided via the tournament website, if there is not a hotel partner, the teams can make their own accommodations with the hotel of their choice.

NO HARD CASTS: No player will be allowed to play with a hard cast (padded or otherwise).

GAME CARDS & MATCH PROCEDURES

Coaches are encouraged to print their own game cards and bring them to each match for reference. The official game card used for scoring and verification will be provided by the referee and collected at the end of the match.

Referees will manage all official game card procedures, including pre-game player check-in, recording goals, disciplinary actions, and finalizing the match report. Coaches must review and sign the official game card after the match, but all recording and handling of the card during the game is the responsibility of the referee.

Player Check-In Procedures

- Before each game, referees will check in players using the official game card
- Only players printed on the game card are eligible to play.
- No write-ins are allowed on game cards.

Post-Match Procedures

- Coaches must review and sign the official game card after the match, but all recording and handling of the card during the game is the responsibility of the referee.
- Coaches, please verify that scores are accurate and that a representative from both teams has signed the game card before they are turned in.

- Once submitted, signed game cards are the official record. An obvious score-entry or transcription error may be corrected by tournament headquarters after verification against the original official game card; referee judgments are not subject to review.

Match Format & Ties
All teams will be guaranteed to play at least three (3) games. In group or round robin play, ties at the end of regulation time will stand. Quarter-Finals, Play-In-Games, Semi-Finals and Finals will go straight to Penalty Kicks in the event of a tie; no extra-time will be played.

Third Game as a Final (Optional)

- Both coaches may request that their third head-to-head match serve as the final only when the published bracket format permits it and the Tournament Director approves the designation before kickoff.
- The Tournament Director must notify the referee and both teams of the approved final designation before kickoff. Coaches may not independently redesignate a group match as a final.

Age Group	Ball Size	Max Roster Size	Min Players on Field	Club Pass Player Limit	Game Format	Game Length
U7-U8 (4v4)	4	8	3	n/a	4v4	2 x 20 min
U9-U10 (7v7)	4	14	4	n/a	7v7	2 x 25 min
U10-U12 (9v9)	4	16	6	n/a	9v9	2 x 30 min

*Game lengths may be shortened to meet scheduling constraints.

HOME TEAM: The first team listed on the schedule is the home team and should wear their light-colored jerseys. The visiting team should wear their dark-colored jersey. Teams without two sets of uniforms will be permitted to use “pinnies” to provide color distinction. The home team will be responsible for supplying a game ball to the referee, and if necessary, changing jerseys in case of a color conflict, UNLESS the home team is wearing white, then they must change to a different color.

- Teams may mutually agree on jersey colors as long as there is no color conflict.
- The referee has final authority and may require a team to change jerseys if the colors are deemed too similar.

UNIFORMS: All uniforms must have a number that matches the number listed on the game card. If you have a duplicate number, you must make the referee aware and be able to distinguish between the players with duplicate numbers. GK jerseys do not have to have a number, but if the GK comes onto the field as a field player, his/her jersey number must be listed on the game card.

PROTESTS AND AUTHORITY: Referee decisions on facts connected with play are final. Eligibility, bracket, administrative, and competition matters must be reported promptly to tournament headquarters and are decided by the Tournament Director or designee. No formal protest or appeal process is offered.

TEAM AND SPECTATOR DISCIPLINE

This event is designed to provide a positive, safe, and enjoyable experience for players, coaches, referees, and families. For this reason, poor behavior will not be tolerated. Arguing with referees, disrespectful comments, aggressive conduct, and unsportsmanlike actions create unnecessary tension and undermine the spirit of youth sports. Everyone attending the tournament is expected to act with respect, patience, and good sportsmanship at all times.

ZERO TOLERANCE: The coach/manager is responsible for the actions of his/her spectators. Verbal and/or physical abuse of referees will not be tolerated and can result in immediate expulsion from the complex. Violations may result in termination of the game. Any individual who has been expelled must leave the field area immediately, or the game could be terminated by the referee with further sanctions added by the Tournament Director. Teams exhibiting poor sportsmanship will not be allowed to participate in subsequent PDF San Antonio tournaments.

- **NOISE MAKERS:** The use of artificial noise makers is prohibited if they are deemed disruptive, excessive, or unsportsmanlike. Referees and tournament officials have full authority to require the immediate removal of any noise maker that interferes with play, sportsmanship, or the overall environment of the event.

EJECTIONS: A red-carded player is ineligible for their next scheduled game. An ejected coach, spectator, or trainer is ineligible for the next scheduled game of the team they were ejected from; this applies even if the next match is a semi-final or final. A second red card issued to the same individual during the tournament will result in that person being expelled from the event. All ejections will be documented on the official game card, and all red cards will be reported to the appropriate State Association.

Yellow Card Accumulation: Accumulation of four (4) yellow cards by the same individual during the tournament will result in a red card by accumulation, and the individual will be suspended for their next scheduled match. After serving the suspension, the individual's yellow card count resets to zero.

Violent Conduct (Players/Coaches/Spectator): Any act of violent conduct, including spitting, fighting, striking, attempting to strike, or any action intended to cause physical harm, is grounds for immediate removal from the tournament. Individuals involved in violent conduct will be expelled from the facility and will not be permitted to return for the remainder of the event. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the Tournament Director.

TEAM STANDINGS AND TIEBREAKERS

Team standings will be based on the following scoring system:

- **Win** 6 points, plus 1 point for each goal scored (max of 3 goals)
- **Tie** 3 points, plus 1 point for each goal scored (max of 3 goals) * A 0-0 tie will be scored as 4 points for each team. 3 points for the tie, and 1 point for the shutout.
- **Loss** 0 points, plus 1 point for each goal scored (max of 3 goals)
- **Shut-out** 1 point is awarded for a shutout

The maximum is 10 points per game (6 win + up to 3 goal points + 1 shutout point). A 0–0 draw earns 4 points per team (3 draw + 1 shutout); a 1–1 draw also earns 4 points per team. A forfeit is recorded as a 1–0 win and awards 8 points to the non-forfeiting team (6 win + 1 goal + 1 shutout). A forfeiting team is ineligible to advance. For standings consistency, the Tournament Director will determine whether all results involving a withdrawing or forfeiting team must be excluded; that determination will be applied uniformly to the affected bracket and published before final standings are certified.

TIEBREAKER: Ties on total standings points will be resolved in the order below. Head-to-head applies only when exactly two teams remain tied and have played each other; for ties involving three or more teams, begin with goal differential among the tied teams. Once a criterion separates teams, apply subsequent criteria to teams still tied without restarting at head-to-head. The Tournament Director will publish the final standings and resolve any incomplete or unplayed-match circumstances.

- Winner of head-to-head competition,
- Goal Differential
- Goals For
- Goals Against
- Most Shutouts
- Kicks from the penalty mark, if feasible and approved by the Tournament Director; otherwise a supervised drawing of lots. A coin toss may be used as the drawing of lots.

SEMI-FINALS AND FINALS: Tied elimination matches proceed directly to kicks from the penalty mark; no extra time. Each side takes five alternating kicks initially, followed, if still tied, by alternating kicks until one team leads after an equal number of attempts. The referee will apply age-appropriate field and player eligibility adjustments.

AWARDS

Tournament medals will be presented to the 1st and 2nd place teams. Medals will be given to each player on the roster. Medals can be picked up at the Tournament Headquarters following your last game. Medals will not be issued if the tournament is cancelled, regardless of standing or potential outcome.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, tournament officials may delay, shorten, relocate, reschedule, or cancel matches, subject to facility safety decisions. The tournament can be postponed to a future rainout date if/when available. Official updates will be posted through the online tournament schedule, and PDF Communication channels. Any match stopped at or after halftime for weather may be declared complete. Lightning or other unsafe conditions require immediate suspension of play; resumption is permitted only after facility and tournament safety clearance. The Tournament Director determines competition outcomes if matches cannot be completed.

TOURNAMENT CANCELLATION: The Tournament Director may restructure or cancel the event due to weather or circumstances beyond the event's control. If the entire event is cancelled and cannot be completed, no further replacement date is guaranteed. Any partial refund, if offered, will be determined after nonrecoverable event expenses have been calculated. No full refund is guaranteed.

REFUNDS: Teams withdrawing after acceptance and scheduling forfeit their entry fee. Once play begins, no refunds are provided for team withdrawal or individual missed games. Any event-wide cancellation refund is governed by the Tournament Cancellation provision above. PDF San Antonio is not responsible for team travel or other incidental expenses.

COMPLEX RULES

Facility-specific restrictions and instructions at STAR Soccer Complex and Blossom Athletic Center apply in addition to these rules. Alcohol, tobacco products, glass containers, drones, pets, and firearms may be restricted by venue policies and applicable law. Follow posted facility rules and staff directions; service-animal and other legally required accommodation remain applicable.

SCHEDULING AND REST: Teams will be scheduled for no more than two matches per day. The scheduling target is at least 60 minutes between 4v4 matches and 75 minutes between 7v7/9v9 matches. Weather or emergency changes may require adjustments by the Tournament Director.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Unlimited substitutions are permitted with referee permission at a stoppage, unless a format-specific tournament directive states otherwise. Substitutes must enter from the team area only after the departing player has left and the referee has authorized the change.

LATE ARRIVALS AND FORFEITS: Teams should be ready at the scheduled kickoff. A team that cannot field the published minimum number of players within 10 minutes after its scheduled kickoff may be declared to have forfeited by the Tournament Director, after consultation with the referee. Tournament officials may shorten the remaining playing time to preserve the schedule.

PLAYER AND COACH SAFETY: The referee controls decisions on the field. Facility personnel control facility closures and safety restrictions. Tournament headquarters administers player

eligibility, discipline, standings, and scheduling. All participants must comply with emergency instructions.

Tournament Rules of Play

4v4 Rules

All 4v4 matches will follow the US Youth Soccer (USYS) Small-Sided Games Standards for the U7-U8 age groups. This includes no goalkeepers, simplified restarts, no deliberate heading, and the use of a designated goal arc to promote player development and safety. The 4v4 format is designed to encourage ball mastery, creativity, and free play in an age-appropriate environment.

Unless otherwise modified by this tournament, all 4v4 matches will follow the current USYS Rules of Play and the IFAB Laws of the Game, adapted for small-sided development.

1. MATCH PLAY: Each match will be played in the 4v4 format, consisting of 4 field players and NO goalkeepers

2. GOAL-AREA / ARC RULES: The marked goal arc is a no-play zone for both teams. Players may run through the arc but may not touch or play the ball while inside it. The arc line is part of the arc.

- Defending team plays the ball inside the arc:
    - Intentional: Direct free kick to the attacking team from the center of the midfield/build-out line.
    - Accidental / Unintentional: Indirect free kick to the attacking team from the center of the midfield/build-out line.
- Attacking team player touches the ball inside the arc:
    - Goal kick to the defending team.
- Ball rolls through the arc without being touched:
    - Play continues.
- Ball comes to a complete stop inside the arc:
    - Goal kick to the defending team.

3. RESTRICTION/BUILD-OUT LINE: The midfield line serves as the build-out line. On goal kicks, opponents must retreat behind midfield and may cross after the ball is in play and is touched by a teammate of the restarting team outside the goal arc. The referee may stop play and retake an improperly challenged restart.

4. DURATION: The duration of the match is 2x20 minutes

5. HEADING: Deliberate heading is prohibited. Award an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the location of the deliberate header, moved to the nearest permitted point outside the goal arc if necessary. Incidental ball-to-head contact is not an offense.

6. THROW INS: There are no throw-ins. All restarts are kick-ins, which are all indirect kicks.

Tournament Rules of Play

7v7 Rules

All 7v7 matches will follow the US Youth Soccer (USYS) Small-Sided Games Standards for the U9-U10 age groups. This includes the use of a goalkeeper, reduced field dimensions, build-out line requirements, the prohibition of deliberate heading, and all age-appropriate player development initiatives established by U.S. Soccer and USYS.

Unless otherwise modified by this tournament, all 7v7 games will adhere to the current USYS Rules of Play and the IFAB Laws of the Game.

1. MATCH PLAY: Each match will be played in the 7v7 format, consisting of 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper.

2. RESTRICTION/BUILD-OUT LINE: The marked build-out line is 10 yards from the top of the penalty area. On a goal kick or goalkeeper possession, opponents must retreat behind this line. Opponents may cross when the goalkeeper releases the ball into play or the goal kick is taken and the ball is in play; they may not charge across while the goalkeeper is still holding the ball. Offside is enforced only in the area between the build-out line and the opponents' goal line.

3. DURATION: The duration of the match is 2x25 minutes

4. PUNTING RULE: Goalkeeper punts and drop kicks (including kicks after a bounce from a hand release) are prohibited. A violation results in an indirect free kick to the opponents at the midfield line, at the point nearest the violation. Goalkeepers may distribute by throwing, rolling, or placing the ball on the ground and kicking it.

> **Definition of Punting**: Punting is defined as the goalkeeper releasing the ball from their hands and striking it with their foot before it touches the ground.
> **This includes:**
> - Traditional punt: Goalkeeper cradles or holds the ball in one or both hands and drives the kicking foot forward through the ball.
> - Drop kick: Goalkeeper drops the ball from their hands and kicks it after it bounces or before it reaches the ground.

5. HEADING THE BALL: Heading the ball is not allowed. Deliberate heading is prohibited. If a player deliberately heads the ball, the result is an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the spot of the infraction. If the header occurs inside the penalty area, the indirect free kick is taken from the nearest point outside the penalty area.

> **Accidental or Ball-to-Head Contact**
> Unintentional, accidental, or "ball-to-head" contact is not an offense, and play should continue.

6. THROW-INS: Throw-ins follow IFAB Law 15, subject to the referee's age-appropriate instruction.

Tournament Rules of Play

9v9 Rules (U10-U12)

This event follows all US Youth Soccer (USYS) U11 Rules of Play, including field dimensions, ball size, match duration, substitution standards, player development initiatives, and age-specific

safety policies. All U10 9v9 matches will be conducted in accordance with the USYS and U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives, including the prohibition of deliberate heading.

Unless otherwise modified by this tournament, all U10 9v9 games will adhere to the current USYS Rules of Play and the IFAB Laws of the Game.

1. MATCH PLAY: Each match will be played in the 9v9 format, consisting of (8) field players and (1) goalkeeper. Games will be played 9v9, consisting of eight (8) field players and one (1) goalkeeper. Maximum roster size: 16 players. Minimum players required to start or continue a match: six (6). Ball size: Size 4.

2. RESTRICTION/BUILD OUT LINE: No Build Out Line

3. DURATION: The duration of the match is 2x30 minutes

4. PUNTING RULE: Punting the ball is allowed.

5. HEADING THE BALL: U12 Heading is allowed. Deliberate heading NOT ALLOWED for U10-U11 age groups. This rule applies to the division age not the player's age. A player playing up to U12 may head the ball.

- If a player in the U10-U11 age group deliberately heads the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infraction, subject to applicable free-kick location restrictions.
- Accidental heading (ball-to-head) contact is not an offense and play may continue at the referee discretion.

6. THROW-INS: Throw-ins follow IFAB Law 15.