



**US YOUTH SOCCER POLICY**

**ON**

**PLAYERS AND PLAYING RULES**

**September 1, 2002**

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**POLICY  
ON  
PLAYERS AND PLAYING RULES**

**PART I—GENERAL**

**Rule 101. DEFINITIONS**

**Section 1.** The definitions of Bylaw 109 of USYSA apply to this policy. Those definitions include the following:

- (1) "**Federation**" means the United States Soccer Federation, Inc.
- (2) "**FIFA**" means the Federation Internationale de Football Association of which the Federation is the national association member for the United States.
- (3) "**region**" means one of those regions established under Bylaw 322.
- (4) "**National Council**" means the National Council of USYSA as provided under Bylaw 311.
- (5) "**Organization Member**" means an organization that is classified as such a member of USYSA as provided by Bylaw 202.
- (6) "**State Association**" means the administrative body within a territory determined by the National Council to carry out USYSA's programs for youth players.
- (7) "**team**" means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.
- (8) "**USYSA**" means the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc.
- (9) "**youth player**" means an individual who has not reached 19 years of age prior to August 1 immediately before the start of any seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during a seasonal year is allowed to complete that seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during August of one seasonal year shall be allowed to complete all of the next seasonal year.

**Section 2.** The following definitions also apply to this policy:

- (1) "**add**" means the addition of a player to a team's roster.
- (2) "**eligibility to play**" means registered and not under suspension.
- (3) "**involuntary release**" means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team authorities.
- (4) "**registration**" means the execution of an intent to play the sport of soccer and the paying of fees to become a member of USYSA.
- (5) "**rostering**" means assignment of a registered player to a team.
- (6) "**select team**" means the official select or all-star team of —
  - (A) USYSA;
  - (B) a region;
  - (C) a State Association;
  - (D) a district or geographical subdivision of a State Association; or
  - (E) any league.
- (7) "**suspension**" means the temporary withdrawal of rights and privilege, such as the right to play, coach, or otherwise administer or participate (directly or indirectly) in soccer, and the suspension is for the entire term of the suspension with all rights and privileges withdrawn unless specifically stated otherwise by the suspending authority.
- (8) "**uniform**" means a jersey or shirt, shorts, thermal undershorts, stockings, shinguards, footwear, warmup jacket, pants, or suit, and other similar items of wear.
- (9) "**voluntary release**" means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of the player.

**Section 3.** The following definitions are suggested for use by State Associations to facilitate communication and understanding among them:

- (1) "**classic league**" means an interclub league in which—
  - (A) the use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any similar process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability, is permitted; and
  - (B) one or more league rules restrict the manner in which players may be rostered to participating teams.
- (2) "**classic team**" means a team that participates in a classic league.

- (3) **“club”**—
  - (A) means an organization that is a member (directly or indirectly) of a State Association that has an identifiable membership of youth soccer players on whose behalf the organization conducts or engages in youth soccer activities; and
  - (B) sometimes referred to as a “league” or “local association”, is the basic administrative unit of USYSA.
- (4) **“district”** means a geographical subdivision of the territory of a State Association.
- (5) **“guest player”** means a registered player participating in a competition for a team to which the player is not rostered for purposes of league play.
- (6) **“interclub tournament team”** means a tournament team whose roster includes players who are members of more than one club.
- (7) **“interclub transfer”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster at the request of the player and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the roster of another team from a different club.
- (8) **“intraclub tournament team”** means a tournament team whose roster includes players who are members of only one club.
- (9) **“intraclub transfer”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster at the request of the player and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the roster of another team from the same club.
- (10) **“league”**—
  - (A) means a structured group of 4 or more teams joined for the purpose inter-team play under a common set of administrative and competition rules; and
  - (B) is differentiated from another league by the rules that govern the rostering of players to each league’s teams, and the different terms used to describe each league do not necessarily reflect the level of ability or talent of teams participating in the league.
- (11) **“league team”** means a team that participates in regularly scheduled league play.
- (12) **“player”** means a youth player registered in accordance with USYSA and State Association rules.
- (13) **“premier league”** means an interclub league in which no rule restricts the manner in which players may be rostered to participating teams, except for rules that—
  - (A) define and prohibit unethical recruiting behavior; or
  - (B) limit the participation of players previously rostered to another team.
- (14) **“premier team”** means a team that participates in a premier league.
- (15) **“recreational all-star team”** means an intraclub tournament team whose roster only includes players selected from teams that participate in the same recreational league or recreation plus league.
- (16) **“recreational league”** means an intraclub league in which—
  - (A) the use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any similar process to roster players to any team on the basis of talent or ability is prohibited;
  - (B) the club administering the league accepts as participants in the league any eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms on registration);
  - (C) a system or rostering players is used to establish a fair or balanced distribution of playing talent among all teams participating; and
  - (D) league rules require that each player must play at least one-half of each game except for reasons of injury, illness, or discipline.
- (17) **“recreational plus league”** means an interclub or intraclub league in which—
  - (A) the use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting or any similar process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability is prohibited;
  - (B) the club or clubs administering the league accept as participants in the league any and all eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms of registration); and
  - (C) the league does not otherwise meet the definition of a recreational league.
- (18) **“recreational plus team”** means a team that participates in a recreational plus league.
- (19) **“recreational team”** means a team that participates in a recreational league.
- (20) **“tournament team”** means a team that includes guest players and is put together for the sole purpose of playing in a tournament or other approved non-league competition.
- (21) **“transfer”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster on the request of the player, and the contemporaneous addition of the player to the roster of another team.

## Rule 102. APPLICABILITY OF POLICY

This policy only applies to State Associations and youth players registered through State Associations, unless specifically stated otherwise.

### **Rule 103. GENDER OF TEAMS**

USYSA recognizes 2 types of team genders:

- (1) Teams with females only are girls teams.
- (2) All other teams are boys teams.

### **Rule 104. AGE GROUPS**

Except as otherwise provided by Rule 105, age groups shall be comprised of youth players who are, before the first day of August of the immediately prior seasonal year—

- (1) under 19 years of age.
- (2) under 18 years of age.
- (3) under 17 years of age.
- (4) under 16 years of age.
- (5) under 15 years of age.
- (6) under 14 years of age.
- (7) under 13 years of age.
- (8) under 12 years of age.
- (9) under 11 years of age.
- (10) under 10 years of age.
- (11) under 8 years of age.
- (12) under 6 years of age.

### **Rule 105. STATE VARIANCES**

A State Association may permit variances in Rules 104 and 205 of this policy in the best interest of developing the sport within the jurisdiction of the State Association. Those variances do not apply to the state level of US Youth Soccer National Championship or Regional or National League competitions.

### **Rule 106. GAME PLAY WITH NON-MEMBERS**

- (a) The USYSA Board of Directors or its designee may grant temporary permission to a regional or USYSA team to participate in games with a team of an organization that is not a member of the Federation or FIFA. In granting that permission, the Board or its designee shall ensure that all USYSA requirements have been met, including insurance requirements.
- (b) A State Association may grant temporary permission to a State Association team, or to a team of a member of the State Association, to participate in games with a team of an organization that is not a member of the Federation or FIFA. In granting that permission, the State Association shall ensure that all USYSA and State Association requirements have been met, including State Association insurance requirements.
- (c) Temporary permission under this rule may not be given for more than a period of one seasonal year. Permission may be renewed.

## **PART II—PLAYER AND ROSTERING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Rule 201. PLAYER REGISTRATION**

**Section 1.** A youth player must register each seasonal year in the State Association in which he or she resides with his or her parent or parents or guardian or guardians, or, for a student in residence at a boarding school, college, or university, the player may register in the state in which the boarding school, college, university, or division of the college or university is located. Any other questions of residency may be determined by the State Association in which the player is registered to vote or holds a current driver's license.

**Section 2.** (a) Any youth player wishing to play on a team of a member of a State Association other than the State Association where the player is registered, must receive written permission from—

- (1) the State Association where the player is registered; and
  - (3) the other State Association of the team on which the player wishes to play.
- (b) Permission must be obtained each seasonal year.

**Section 3.** A youth player is registered for a seasonal year from the moment the player or the player's representative executes the registration form and pays the appropriate fees.

#### **Rule 202. PLAYER REGISTRATION FEE**

The USYSA player registration fee shall be \$0.50 for each player each seasonal year. These player registration fees paid to a State Association must be paid to USYSA on the last day of each month of the seasonal year for which the fees were paid.

#### **Rule 203. OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PLAYER TRYOUTS**

**Section 1.** Except as provided by section 2 of this Rule, a player wishing to try out for the Olympic Development Program may only try out and be selected for the Program through the State Association in which the player may be registered under Rule 201 of this policy.

**Section 2.** A player given permission to play under section 2 of Rule 201 of this policy in a State Association other than where the player is registered, may request written permission to try out for the Olympic Development Program of that other State Association. To be eligible to try out in that other State Association, the player must receive written permission from—

- (1) the State Association where the player is registered; and
- (2) the other State Association where the player wishes to try out.

**Section 3.** A player may only try out for the Olympic Development Program in one State Association. A player is responsible for all Olympic Development Program fees of the State Association in which the player tries out.

#### **Rule 204. PROOF OF AGE**

Proof of age shall consist of a birth certificate, a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States, a birth registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records, a passport, an alien registration card issued by the United States Government, a certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age, a current driver's license, an unexpired federal, state, or local government identification card (if documentation of date of birth is required), or a certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate government agency. Hospital, baptismal, or religious certificates will not be accepted.

#### **Rule 205. ROSTER LIMITATIONS**

Except as otherwise provided by Rule 105—

- (1) a team playing eleven (11) a side may not have more than 18 youth players on its roster at any given time during the seasonal year; and
- (2) a team playing eleven (11) a side may not have fewer than 7 youth players on its roster at any given time during the seasonal year.
- (3) a team playing less than eleven (11) a side may not have more than two times the number of players played or less than one time the number of players played plus one on its roster at any given time during the seasonal year.

#### **Rule 206. MULTIPLE ROSTERING**

A State Association may allow a player to be rostered on more than one youth team each seasonal year.

#### **Rule 207. INTERNATIONAL CLEARANCES**

For a player who comes to the United States on or after the player is 12 years of age, the player must request and receive an international clearance from the Federation. However, an international clearance is not required of a player who is 12, 13, 14, 15, or 16 years of age if the player and the player's parents sign a statement that the player has not signed a professional contract or received money from a professional team for playing soccer.

## **Rule 208. ADULT GAMES**

**Section 1.** A youth player may play an unlimited number of adult games without losing his or her youth eligibility. The youth player must notify his or her youth coach or other authorized team official of the player's intention to play adult games. The youth player shall request, in writing, (1) eligibility clearance from the Youth State Association through which the player is registered, and (2) permission from the appropriate Adult State Association. When the clearance and permission have been granted, the Adult State Association has sole discretion in permitting a youth player to play adult games and will be responsible for establishing the procedures under which the youth player will be allowed to play. In the event of a conflict between an adult game and a youth game, the youth game shall take precedence. A youth player who is required to sign an adult form shall retain youth eligibility.

**Section 2.** (a) A youth team with the written permission and mutual consent of both the Youth and Adult State Associations may play in an adult-approved league and not lose its youth eligibility to compete in the US Youth Soccer National Championships competitions. If the youth team's players are required to sign an adult form, the team shall retain its youth eligibility.

(b) The youth team will be required to play under the rules of the Youth State Association concerning registration, roster rules, transfer rules, and any additional qualifications that are required to be eligible for the US Youth Soccer National Championships competitions. Whether participation in any adult league shall qualify a youth team for the US Youth Soccer National Championships competitions play shall be determined by each Youth State Association.

## **Rule 209. USE OF INELIGIBLE PLAYERS**

A team shall forfeit each game of the team in which—

- (1) an unregistered player was with the team at the game in a uniform; or
- (2) a player was improperly entered on the team's roster.

## **PART III—GAME PLAY**

### **Rule 301. RULES OF PLAY**

**Section 1.** Except as provided by USYSA or its State Associations, the FIFA "Laws of the Game" apply to all competitions sponsored by USYSA. Players under 10 years of age may play soccer in accordance with the rules of USYSA's Development Player Program—Modified Playing Rules for Under10, Under 8, and Under 6.

**Section 2.** State Associations may not approve games involving teams Under 10 or younger, unless those games are conducted with not more than 8 players on each side.

### **Rule 302. SUBSTITUTIONS**

**Section 1.** Except as provided by USYSA or its State Associations, substitutions shall be unlimited except where specified otherwise in the rules and regulations for a special competition.

**Section 2.** Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee, at any stoppage in play.

### **Rule 303. LENGTH OF GAMES, OVERTIME PERIODS, AND BALL SPECIFICATIONS**

**Section 1.** (a) Except as provided by USYSA and its State Associations, the length of games, overtime periods, ball size, ball circumference, and ball weight for each age group is as follows:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Game Length</u>	<u>Overtime Periods</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Circumference</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Under 19	Two 45' halves	Two 15' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 18	Two 45' halves	Two 15' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 17	Two 45' halves	Two 15' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.

Under 16	Two 40' halves	Two 15' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 15	Two 40' halves	Two 15' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 14	Two 35' halves	Two 10' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 13	Two 35' halves	Two 10' halves	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
Under 12	Two 30' halves	Two 10' halves	#4	25-26 in.	11-13 ozs.

(b) In tournament play, if the game is still tied after overtime periods, FIFA "Kicks from the Penalty Mark" rules apply to determine the winner.

**Section 2.** (a) Except as provided by USYSA and its State Associations, the length of games, ball size, ball circumference, and ball weight for each age group shall be as follows:

Age Group	Game Length	Size	Circumference	Weight
Under 10	As Modified Rules specify	#4	25-26 in.	11-13 ozs.
Under 8	As Modified Rules specify	#3	23-24 in.	11-12 ozs.
Under 6	As Modified Rules specify	#3	23-24 in.	11-12 ozs.

(b) For the Under 10, Under 8, and Under 6 competitions, ties will stand.

**Rule 304. UNIFORMS**

**Section 1.** In this rule, "team member" means a player, coach, assistant coach, or other official of a team.

**Section 2.** A team member is not prohibited by USYSA from having a mark or name, or both, on any part of the team member's uniform being worn at a game, if the mark or name is related to an item or service that is appropriate for youth. The Organization Member with which the team member is registered shall determine the appropriateness. An Organization Member, or its member, may be more restrictive on uniform marks or names than allowed under this rule. Any inappropriate mark or name on the team member's uniform must be removed, replace, or covered before the team member may continue to participate in the game.

**PART IV—PERMISSION TO TRAVEL AND HOST**

**Rule 401. PERMISSION TO TRAVEL AND HOST TOURNAMENTS AND GAMES**

Permission to travel and to host tournaments and games is as provided by the USYSA Travel and Tournament Policy.