



**POLICY ON THE
US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES**

October 16, 2023

US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS POLICY
2023-2024
PART I—GENERAL

Rule 101. DEFINITIONS

Except as otherwise provided, the following definitions apply to this National Championships policy ("policy"):

- (1) "**Add**" means the addition of a player to a team's roster.
- (2) "**Article**" preceding a Roman numeral means a reference to a specific portion of the US Youth Soccer Bylaws.
- (3) "**Board of Directors**" means the Board of Directors of US Youth Soccer established under Article XIII.
- (4) "**Club**" means an organization providing soccer to Youth Players that is a member of a State Association; provided however, a "Club" need not have the word "Club" as part of its official name.
- (5) "**Club Pass**" means a US Youth Soccer pass which—
 - (A) issued to a registered Youth Player by a Club in compliance with the rules of the State Association of which the Club is a member;
 - (B) issued as provided by this policy; and
 - (C) specifies the Club of which the Youth Player is a registered member.
- (6) "**Eligibility to Play**" means registered and not under Suspension.
- (7) "**Federation**" means the United States Soccer Federation, Inc.
- (8) "**Game Roster**" means the list of players who will participate in a particular competition.
- (9) "**Involuntary Release**" means the removal of a player from a team's roster at the request of team authorities.
- (10) "**National Championships Competitions**" means the competitions provided for under this policy for the 13 and Under, 14 and Under, 15 and Under, 16 and Under, 17 and Under, 18 and Under, and 19 and Under age groups.
- (11) "**Recreational Team**" means a team that participates in a Recreational League.
- (12) "**Recreational League**" means an intra-Club 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 of 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.
- (13) "**Region**" means one of those Regions established under Article VIII.
- (14) "**Registration**" means the signing of an intent to play the sport of soccer and the paying of fees to become a member of US Youth Soccer.
- (15) "**Rostering**" means assignment of a registered player to a team.
- (16) "**Select Team**" means the official select or all-star team of —
 - (A) US Youth Soccer;
 - (B) a Region;
 - (C) a State Association;
 - (D) a district or geographical subdivision of a State Association; or
 - (E) any league
- (17) "**State Association**" means the administrative body within a territory determined by the National Council to carry out US Youth Soccer's programs for Youth Players.
- (18) "**Suspension**" means the temporary withdrawal of rights and privileges, 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.

(19) **“Team”** means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.

(20) **“Team Roster”** means a list of registered players eligible to play for a Team.

(21) **“US Youth Soccer”** means the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc.

(22) **“National Championship Series Management Group (“Group” or “NCSMG”)** shall be comprised of the Director of Competition and Event Operations, the National Championship Series Program Manager, the four (4) Regional NCS Program Managers, and no more than two (2) Members at Large. Each Group member shall have one vote on any issue before the Group. The National Championships Series Program Manager shall serve as the Chair of the Group.

(23) **“US Youth Soccer Director of Competition and Event Operations”** means the individual overseeing the cups for US Youth Soccer.

(24) **“Voluntary Release”** means the removal of a player from a team’s roster at the request of the player.

(25) **“Youth Player”** means an individual as defined by Article III of the US Youth Soccer Bylaws.

(26) The National Championship Series is a single competition conducted at the State, regional and national levels.

Rule 102. ESTABLISHMENT

Section 1. US Youth Soccer establishes and shall organize annually National Championships Competitions in the 13 and Under, 14 and Under, 15 and Under, 16 and Under, 17 and Under, 18 and Under, and 19 and Under age groups. This policy applies to those competitions.

Section 2. There shall be individual, separately conducted National Championships Competitions for boys and girls in each of the age groups. The competitions shall be conducted at the State Association, regional, and national levels.

Section 3. Teams that qualify directly to the National Championships through E64 or the National League Pro Playoff platform **MAY** be granted a waiver by their State Association from participating in their State Cup competition if they do not wish to participate at Regionals. **ALL** other teams and those E64 or National Pro Playoff platform teams that are not granted a waiver by their State Association **MUST** participate in their State Cup to participate at the National Championships.

Rule 103. TITLES

Section 1. The title of the National Championships Competitions for each of the age groups shall be “US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS”. The cup for each boys and girls age group shall be engraved annually with the name of the champion team of that age group.

Section 2. The cups are the property of US Youth Soccer and shall be competed for annually on dates and at sites determined by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Management Group as approved by the Chief Executive Officer, and/or designee.

Section 3. National Championships Competitions at the State Association and regional levels shall include in their title the name US Youth Soccer National Championships as follows:

(1) for State Association competitions: “US YOUTH SOCCER [insert State Association name] CHAMPIONSHIPS” or “US YOUTH SOCCER [insert State Association name] STATE CUP”.

(2) for regional competitions: “US Youth Soccer [directional] [or] [insert Region name] REGION CHAMPIONSHIPS”.

(3) The US Youth Soccer National Championships Series logo is required on all event merchandise and graphics at the State Associations’ competitions, regional competitions and national competition. The logo can be used as part of event artwork or as a stand-alone logo.

Rule 104. AWARDS TO TEAMS AND PLAYERS

Section 1. The champion Team for each boys and girls age group at the national level each year will be presented with the cup for that age group.

Section 2. Each champion and second place Team referred to in section 1 of this rule will receive, at the national level, a National Champion Plaque which will remain in its keeping permanently.

Section 3. The players and coaches of each of the two (2) Teams that are first and second place Teams competing in the National Championships at the national level in each of the boys and girls age groups shall be awarded individual medals.

Section 4. The players and coaches of each of the two (2) Teams that are first and second place in the National Championships Competitions at the Region level in each of the boys and girls age groups shall be awarded medals as determined by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership.

Section 5. The players and coaches of each champion Team of each boys and girls age group at the State Association level of competition shall receive an embroidered patch.

Rule 105. ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. (a) The entire administration of these competitions is vested in the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Management Group and the Chief Executive Officer, and/or designee.

(b) Any matters not provided for in this policy shall be decided by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership, and all decisions are final.

Section 2. There shall be a National Championship Series Management Group (“Group”) under the direction of the US Youth Soccer Chief Executive Officer, and/or designee. The Group is responsible for the administration of the Championship Series competition.

Section 3. (a) The US Youth Soccer National Championship Series Management Group shall determine each year the dates for deadline for entry in the National Championships Competitions, the entry fee for these competitions, and the date and sites of the succeeding year’s regional and national level Championships Competitions. All State Associations will be advised, in writing, of that date not later than January 1st of each year and not less than 365 days prior to the deadline for entry.

(b) Not later than the deadline for entry, each State Association wishing to enter these competitions shall submit to the US Youth Soccer national office, the following:

(1) a non-refundable fee in the amount set by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership for each competition.

(2) an entry form indicating the State Association’s intention to compete.

Rule 106. PRECEDENCE OF GAMES

National Championships Competitions games shall take precedence over all other youth games.

Rule 107. NOTICES

All notices and other communications required to be given under this policy shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the Director of Competition and Event Operations.

PART II—ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPETITIONS

Subpart A—Levels of Competitions Rules

Rule 201. STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL LEVELS

Each National Championship competition shall be conducted at the following levels:

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- (1) The first level of competitions for all boys and girls age groups is at the State Association level.
- (2) The second level of competitions for all boys and girls age groups is at the regional level.
- (3) The third level of competitions for all boys and girls age groups is at the national level.

Rule 202. STATE ASSOCIATION LEVEL COMPETITION

Section 1. (a) Each State Association shall determine—

- (1) which age groups, and whether boys or girls, or both, that it will conduct State Association level competitions for; and
- (2) the Teams that represent it for each boys and girls age group at the National Championships Competitions for the Region of which the State Association is a member.

(b) The format for the competitions at the State Association level to determine Teams representing the State Association shall be a tournament format established by the State Association. League competition may not be considered a tournament format.

Section 2. Prior to the competitions at the State Association level, the schedule and plans for determining the State Association representatives shall be submitted for approval to the Regional Event Managers of that State Association's Region.

Section 3. Teams granted an exemption (waiver) per Rule 102, Section 3 are required to submit a maximum 22-player roster to their State by the age group freeze date. The roster will establish the team's State Cup roster for continuity at the Regional and National levels.

Rule 203. REGIONAL LEVEL COMPETITION

Section 1. Each of the Regions shall conduct National Championships Competitions. The competitions at the regional level shall determine the Teams that represent the competition for each of the boys and girls age groups at the national level of the National Championships Competitions.

Section 2. The format for the competition to determine the Teams as provided by section 1 of this rule shall be that format established by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership.

Section 3. US Youth Soccer Member State Associations and other interested entities may bid to host the National Championships competitions. In the event that other interested entities bid, the applicable Member State Association(s) will be notified. The relationship between the interested parties and the Member State Association(s) will be evaluated when considering all bids to host. The regional level of competition must take place within the applicable region.

Rule 204. NATIONAL LEVEL COMPETITION

At a minimum, the Teams representing each of the Regions in each of the boys and girls age groups shall compete in the National Championships Competitions to determine the champion Team for each of those boys and girls age groups. The format for the competition to determine the champion Teams shall be that format established by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership.

Subpart B—Teams and Players

Rule 221. TEAM ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. The National Championships Competitions shall be open to any Team whose players are registered with US Youth Soccer through a State Association if the Team is in compliance with all of the following requirements:

- (1) The Team must be comprised of properly registered and rostered Youth Players (as defined by US Youth Soccer).

- (2) The Team must be in good standing with its State Association and must be in compliance with, and has not violated, any of the bylaws and policies of US Youth Soccer.
- (3) The Team must be entered in the competition of the State Association in which at least 50 percent of its players are registered.
- (4) The Team must meet the requirements established by its state association.
- (5) A Team must demonstrate continuity of rosters between the State Cup and every level of the National Championships Competitions by maintaining a minimum fifty percent (50%) players common to the roster of the Team between the frozen State Cup roster and the frozen Regional roster and between the frozen State Cup roster and the frozen National Championship roster.

Section 2. A Club may issue a Club Pass to any Youth Player who is a registered Youth Player of the Club before the Team to which such Youth Player is to be rostered for the regional level of the National Championships Competitions submit its roster for its competition at the regional level (Rule 221, Section 6 (2)) or for the National level of the National Championships Competitions submits its roster for its competition at the National level (Rule 221, Section 6 (3)).

(1) A State Association is not required to consider as a rostered player a player on a school Team when the State Association administers school programs.

(A) In addition to the application of the Club Pass provisions of the policy, a Team participating in the National Championships Competitions may release involuntarily a player from its roster if the player has violated 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.

(B) A Team may have on its Team Roster only players of the following age groups for the seasonal year in which the Team is participating in the National Championships:

(1) For Teams competing in the 13 and Under, 14 and Under, and 15 and Under age groups, each player on the Team must be (A) of the age of the age group competition in which the Team is participating in that seasonal year, or (B) of the age in either of the next 2 younger age groups of that age group competition in which the Team is participating in that seasonal year.

(2) For the Teams competing in the 16 and Under, 17 and Under, 18 and Under, and 19 and Under age groups, each player on the Team must be (A) of the age of the age group competition in which the Team is participating in that seasonal year, or (B) of the age of any younger age group, through the 14 and Under age group, of that age group competition in which the Team is participating in that seasonal year.

Section 3. Every Team in the National Championships Series shall have a Team Roster, a National Championships roster determined under this rule based on the players on the team's roster, and a Game Roster for every match or competition.

(1) Team Roster

A Team Roster shall have a minimum of 9 registered players on its roster at all times.

(2) National Championships Roster

A Team shall have a National Championships roster based on its Team Roster at the State Association level of the National Championships Competitions, approved by the State Association where the Team resides. The Team Roster may have up to 22 Youth Players on the roster at all levels of the competitions.

(3) Game Roster

The Game Roster shall be prepared by the Team and submitted to the competition authority at a time set by the State Association for State Cup play, by the Region for Regional Cup play, and not later than 60 minutes prior to each scheduled game in National Championships play at the national level. The Game Roster shall have a maximum of 18 players and a minimum of 7 players. Every player listed on the game roster must be included on the Team's National Championships roster to be eligible to participate with the Team in the National Championships Competitions.

Section 4. 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.
- (3) the Team no longer has a recognized Team official as required by Rule 241, sections 1 and 2, on the Team bench.

Section 5. It shall be the responsibility of the appropriate official designated by each entering State Association to certify the eligibility of competing Teams and to provide the Teams with a copy of this policy.

Section 6. The Team must provide its National Championships roster for National Championships Competitions as follows:

- (1) at the State Association level, prior to the Team's first National Championship game at the State Association level or no earlier than 14 days prior to the beginning of that Team's competition at the State level;
- (2) at the regional level, at the time of the Team's Registration for the Team's age group competition at that level that shall be determined by the Region which shall be no later than 7 days prior to the beginning of the Team's competition at the regional level; and
- (3) at the national level, at the time of the Team's Registration for the Team's age group competition at that level that shall be determined by the NCSMG which shall be no later than 7 days prior to the beginning of that Team's competition at the national level.
- (4) After the freeze date set by the State Association, the Regional freeze date or the National freeze date, a State Association may correct administrative errors to team rosters until the beginning of competition at each respective level.

Section 7. A Team may compete in only one age group of the National Championships Competitions during the seasonal year. Except that an 18U team that plays in an 18U age group or a combined 18U/19U age group at the State level may compete in either the 18U or 19U age group at the Regional level and the same age group at the National level.

Rule 222. FORFEITS FOR FAILURE TO COMPETE

Section 1. Any Team or State Association intending to forfeit at the national level must give notice of its intention to forfeit in writing to the Director of Competition and Event Operations within the deadline set by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership. The notice shall include the reason for the forfeit.

Section 2. Forfeits and failure to compete at the national level by a Team or State Association shall be a matter of review by the Board of Directors that shall have the authority to take action against the Team or State Association that the Board considers appropriate.

Section 3. Any Team or State Association failing to give notice of intention to forfeit may, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, have additional penalties imposed on it.

Section 4. Any Team or State Association intending to forfeit regional games must give notice in writing to its Regional Championships Program Manager in accordance with the Region's policies and procedures.

Section 5. Forfeits and failures to compete in games at the regional level by a Team or State Association shall be dealt with in accordance with the Region's policies and procedures.

Section 6. Match Manipulation at the National Championships Series competitions at all levels. Teams failing to compete in the spirit of the competition or are involved in the manipulation of a game result are subject to forfeiture and disqualification from all levels of the competition.

- (1) if failing to compete is observed and confirmed, the competition authority representative will give notice to the offending Team or Teams.
- (2) if corrective action is not taken, the Team or Teams will be subject to disqualification.

Rule 223. FORFEITS GENERALLY

At the discretion of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership, any Team proven guilty of violating this policy or of any other requirement of US Youth Soccer shall be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, forfeiture of all games and the preceding competition and fines and Suspensions.

Rule 224. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Section 1. A player must be properly registered and rostered in accordance with the rules of US Youth Soccer and the State Association.

Section 2. A youth player may be on the National Championships roster of only one Team within that Club until the team has been eliminated from the National Championships Series during any seasonal year.

1. A Youth Player who is rostered to an eliminated Team which participated at a National Championship Series level and which has been issued a Club Pass of his/her Club may be rostered to another Team of his/her Club at the next level of the National Championship Series.
2. In the entire National Championship Series, a team may add two players from other Clubs teams which had been eliminated in a lower level of competition.
3. Subject to the foregoing, and subject to the provisions of Rule 221, Section 1 (5), at each level of the National Championship Competitions, a Team may add as many registered Youth Players holding Club Passes of the Club of which the Team is a member so long as the roster does not exceed 22 players.
4. A Team may not change Clubs at any time after the commencement of the National Championship competitions.

Section 3. A player who has been suspended may play after the player's term of Suspension has expired.

Section 4. The first National Championships roster of a Team to which the player is rostered is the only Team with which the player may participate in at each level of the National Championships Competitions for a seasonal year.

Rule 225. TEAM AND PLAYER BREACHES OF RULES

Section 1. It is the responsibility of the National Championships NCSMG to investigate a properly protested violation immediately following its receipt. Failure to cooperate with that investigation shall result in disciplinary action up to and including Suspension.

Section 2. Any Team found guilty of using an ineligible player is not eligible to compete further in the National Championships Competitions in the current seasonal year. Any coach, manager, or official found guilty of knowingly using an ineligible player is not eligible to compete further in the National Championships Competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year. A player found guilty of submitting falsified birth information is prohibited from competing further in National Championships Competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year.

Section 3. A player who is sent-off from any game within the National Championship Series is prohibited from participating in the next immediately following National Championship Series game played by the player's Team. This encompasses any stage, including the State Association, regional and

national levels within a season, or from a season ending game to a season starting game. A player may receive more than a one-game Suspension.

Section 4. Coaches and other Team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in this policy, including cautions, ejections, and standard Suspensions. Any other individuals who may be reasonably construed as being associated with a Team, such as relatives and spectators, are also subject to the jurisdiction and authority of US Youth Soccer. Any coach or Team official shall be held responsible for the actions of any individual at any game that, in the opinion of the referee, is a supporter of that Team.

Rule 226. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

Section 1. All questions relating to the qualifications of competitors, to interpretation of eligibility and/or the rules, or any dispute or protest concerning the National Championships Competitions, shall be referred to the National Championships Committee regarding games at the national level, or to the NCSMG regarding games at the regional level.

Section 2. (a) To be valid and eligible for consideration, each protest —

(1) must be orally lodged by a Team official listed on the Team Roster involved in the game

with the referee and with the opposing coach at the game site before entering the field of play or leaving the game site, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section; and

(2) must be filed with the NCSMG within 2 hours after the completion of the game being protested, accompanied by—

(A) a fee in an amount determined by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership;

(B) 5 written copies of the protest, which must include full particulars of the grounds on which the protest is lodged; and

(C) 5 written copies of any information to be presented by witnesses.

(b) Any protest relating to the grounds, goal posts, bars, or other appurtenances of the game shall be entertained only if a written objection has been lodged with the referee and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.

(c) The NCSMG with which the protest is properly lodged shall immediately upon receipt of the protest notify the Team against which the protest is made and shall send a copy of the protest and all particulars to that Team, which will then have the right to defend its case, with or without witnesses.

Section 3. (a) An appeal of a decision regarding a protest may be appealed as provided by US Youth Soccer Article XVII. Any such appeal must be filed within 2 hours of receiving the decision—

(1) if a decision of the State Cup Championships Committee, with the Chairman of that Committee who shall immediately notify the NCSMG; or

(2) if a decision of the Regional Championships Committee, with the Chairman of that Committee who shall immediately notify the NCSMG; or

(3) if a decision of the NCSMG, with the Chairman of that Committee who shall immediately notify the Director of Competition and Event Operations.

(b) Each appeal filed under subsection (a) of this section must be accompanied by—

(1) a fee in an amount determined by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership; and

(2) 5 written copies of the appeal.

Section 4. Any party to a protest or appeal shall be accorded the right to be assisted in the presentation of the party's case at the protest or appeal proceeding.

Section 5. A plea of ignorance to the rules and regulations of the National Championships

Competitions is not sufficient grounds for a protest or appeal. Violators may expect appropriate action by US Youth Soccer.

Section 6. In National Championships Competitions at the State Association level, decisions made on protests and appeals by the state protest and appeal authority are binding and allow that competition to proceed.

Section 7. Match Manipulation: An appeal of the decision regarding Match Manipulation may be appealed as provided by US Youth Soccer Article XVII (3). Any such appeal is subject:

1. If the state or Regional Championships Committee determines that a Team is guilty of Match Manipulation, the Chairman of the committee shall immediately notify the NCSMG; or
2. If the NCSMG determines that a Team is guilty of Match Manipulation, the Chairman of the committee shall immediately notify the Director of Competition and Event Operations.

Subpart C—Game Play

Rule 241. PASSES, ROSTERS, AND UNIFORMS

Section 1. At the State Association, regional, and national levels of National Championships Competitions, each player and Team official listed on a Team's National Championships roster must carry the current seasonal year US Youth Soccer member pass. The member pass issued to a player shall be a pass identifying the Club by name or other appropriate means of identification. The US Youth Soccer member pass must be laminated and carry a current photograph of the player or Team official, as the case may be, and be signed by the appropriate official of the State Association.

Section 2. Each player at the State Association, regional, and national levels of the National Championships Competitions must be listed on the US Youth Soccer National Championships roster for the player's Team for that level. All information listed on the roster must be verified by the appropriate official of the State Association and signed by that official for each level of the National Championships Competitions.

Section 3. (a) The Team's National Championships roster and the US Youth Soccer member passes must be available at the game site at all times. The roster shall include the number of each player's jersey.

(b) Each player shall have a number on the player's jersey. The number shall be affixed to the back of the jersey and shall be clearly visible. Each player on a Team must wear a number different from the number of every other player on the Team. Numbered jerseys for goalkeepers are optional.

(c) At the national level of the National Championships Competitions, each player shall have on his or her shorts the US Youth Soccer patch provided each player.

(d) Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from other players and game officials.

(e) At every level of the National Championships Competitions, each player, Team and Team official may only have on his/her/their apparel the name, logo, or other identifying mark of US Youth Soccer or a member directly or indirectly of US Youth Soccer.

(1) A name, logo, or other identifying mark of any youth soccer organization other than US Youth Soccer or its member must be removed, replaced, or covered before a player, Team or Team official may enter or remain at a field complex where the National Championships competition is being held.

(2) After an initial warning pursuant to (e)(1) above, the name, logo, or other identifying mark of any youth soccer organization other than US Youth Soccer or its member must be removed before the player, Team or Team official may enter or continue in the competition.

Rule 242. PLAYING RULES

Section 1. The playing rules of the National Championships Competitions shall conform to the IFAB “Laws of the Game” except as provided by this rule and as modified by the US Youth Soccer Players and Playing Rules.

Section 2. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the length of games, overtime play periods, ball size, ball circumference, and ball weight for each age group shall be as follows:

Age Group	Game Length	Overtime Play	Size	Circumference	Weight
19 and Under	Two 45' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
18 and Under	Two 45' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
17 and Under	Two 45' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
16 and Under	Two 40' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
15 and Under	Two 40' halves	Two 15' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
14 and Under	Two 35' halves	Two 10' periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.
13 and Under	Two 35" halves	Two 10" periods	#5	27-28 in.	14-16 ozs.

(b)(1) In competitions at the State Association and regional levels, tie games at the end of regulation playing time will stand except for each quarterfinal (if applicable), semi-final and final game in each age group.

(2) In competitions at the national level, tie games at the end of regulation playing time will stand except for each semi-final and final game in each age group.

(c) If a game is tied at the end of regulation play and overtime periods are to be played to determine a winner, 2 complete overtime periods as provided in subsection (a) of this section will be played after the end of regulation play. If the game is still tied after the end of the 2 overtime periods, FIFA “Kicks from the Penalty Mark” rules will apply in order to determine the winner.

Section 3. At all National Championships Competitions-

(1) for the 13 and Under and 14 and Under age groups, unlimited substitutions shall be allowed; and

(2) for all other age groups, a maximum of 7 substitutions for each Team shall be allowed in each game during each half of play and during overtime play. After leaving the game during a half of play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game during the same half of play. After leaving the game during overtime play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game.

(3) If a player is suspected of suffering a head injury they may be substituted for evaluation without the substitutions counting against the Teams total number of allowed substitutions during each half or overtime period. If the player with the suspected head injury has received clearance from the events' Health Care Professional, the player may re-enter at any stoppage of play. The evaluated player must replace the original substitute and will not count as a substitution. The temporary substituted player may re-enter the game as a regular substitution. A Team may only make a temporary substitution if they have a substitution available. Should the temporary substitute receive a red card, that player will be removed from the game and the team will play a player down. If the player being evaluated is cleared after the red card, they would be eligible to return to play as provided by the substitution rules based on the age group.

Section 4. (a) At the National Championships Competitions at the regional and national levels, unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed if neither Team is at fault and play has not begun in the second half. If play is stopped during the second half and play cannot be resumed and if neither Team is at fault, the Regional or National Championships Committee may deem the game complete. However, if play is stopped at any time due to one of the Teams being at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the Regional or National Championships Committee whether the game is to be replayed or declared a forfeit.

(b) At the National Championships Competitions at the regional and national levels, all protests and appeals must be submitted by a Team official listed on the Team Roster involved in the game.

For protests involving completed games, see sections 1 and 2 of Rule 226.

Rule 243. GAME OFFICIALS

Section 1. For National Championships Competitions at the national level, the US Youth Soccer National Referee Administrator, or designee, shall appoint the game officials. For National Championships Competitions at the regional level, the Regional Referee Administrator, or designee, shall appoint the game officials.

Section 2. Any referee appointed to officiate in any National Championship competition game may not be a past or present member of either of the competing Teams.

Section 3. The scale of charges for referees shall be—

- (1) for State Association level competition, as set by the State Association.
- (2) for regional level competition, as set by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership.
- (3) for national level competition, as set by the US Youth Soccer National Championship Leadership.

Section 4. The referee shall have the power to decide on the fitness of the ground in all games. In other respects, the duties of the referee and assistant referee are as defined in the “Laws of the Game.”

Section 5. In the event the referee appointed fails to appear and where assistant referees have been appointed, one of the assistant referees shall take charge. Where assistant referees have not been appointed and the referee fails to put in an appearance, the coaches or managers of the opposing Teams must agree on a referee for the game. The same procedure will apply in the event of a referee becoming ill during the process of a game.

Section 6. The referee has the power during the game to deal with players guilty of violent conduct or using threatening or abusive language. The referee shall forward the name of any offender within 2 days thereafter to the State Association with a copy to the Director of Competition and Event Operations. No player shall leave the field of play without the consent of the referee.

Section 7. The referee must forward to the Competition Administrator on the official game report form, the results of the game, a list of the players participating in the game, and all particulars related to the game.

PART III—AMENDMENT OF POLICY

301. AMENDMENT OF POLICY

A member of US Youth Soccer or its staff may offer an amendment to this policy for review by the National Championship Committee and recommendation to the Board of Directors.

