



AYSO National Games
2027 Tournament Guidelines

Table of Contents

PURPOSE OF THE AYSO NATIONAL GAMES	4
SCOPE	4
PLAYER ELIGIBILITY POLICY	4
PLAYER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT	4
PLAYER PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT	4
COACH ELIGIBILITY	5
TEAM FORMATION POLICY	6
Team Roster Sizes and Player Numbers on the Field.....	6
Age Divisions.....	7
Definition of Core Division.....	8
Team Formation Limitations.....	8
Guest Player Policy.....	9
Playing Up.....	9
Team Rosters.....	10
STANDARDS FOR UNIFORMS AND PLAYER EQUIPMENT	10
Additional Uniform and Equipment Information.....	10
TEAM CHECK-IN	11
SOCCERFEST PARTICIPATION	12
Pool Play Points Awarded for Soccerfest.....	12
Soccerfest Method.....	13
SPORTSMANSHIP	13
Sportsmanship Monitoring Process.....	14
GAME FORMAT	14
Pool Play & Elimination Games.....	14
Game Duration.....	15
Pool Play Points.....	15
Points Per Game.....	15
Soccerfest Participation Bonus Points.....	16
Pool Play Tiebreakers.....	16
SEMIFINAL AND FINALS MATCHES ENDING IN A TIE	16
PRE-GAME CHECK-IN	16
SUBSTITUTIONS AND PLAYING TIME	17
FORFEITS	17
DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	17
U.S. Soccer Respect the Ref Campaign.....	17
Team Members.....	18
Coaches.....	18
Spectators.....	19
Points Deducted in Standings.....	19
Additional Sanctions.....	19

REFEREES.....	19
Overview.....	19
Check-In and Assignments.....	19
DISPOSITION OF ABANDONED OR TERMINATED GAMES.....	20
AWARDS.....	20
TOURNAMENT FEES.....	20
REFUND POLICY.....	21
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COACHES AND SPECTATORS.....	21
RULES INTERPRETATION & AMENDMENTS.....	21
REFEREE SPORTSMANSHIP REPORT/RATING CRITERIA.....	21
AYSO National Rules and Regulations on Substitutions.....	22

PURPOSE OF THE AYSO NATIONAL GAMES

The AYSO National Games shall offer an opportunity to bring together different Regions, Areas, and Sections to share in the diverse soccer culture of the AYSO family. This occasion focuses on sportsmanship, team spirit and making new friends through the activities and events that are offered during this weeklong event. The tournament will be held July 5 – 11, 2027. *The tournament should not be interpreted nor represented as any form of an AYSO National Championship.*

SCOPE

The AYSO National Games consists of teams formed by Regions, Areas or Sections consisting of eligible players from within a Region, Area or Section, as described below.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY POLICY

A player must fulfill both a registration requirement and a primary program participation requirement to participate in the AYSO National Games. The rules aim to prevent participants from solely joining the organization for the purpose of participating in the AYSO National Games and forming teams with such participants.

A player may only play on one team.

PLAYER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

Eligible players must be registered in AYSO' registration system of record for Membership Year 2026-2027.

PLAYER PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

Players meeting the registration requirement above must also be verified by the Regional Commissioner as having actively participated in a defined AYSO primary program during a fall season, spring season or split season (program which begins in fall, closes for a while and continues in spring).

For purposes of this determination, the following definitions shall apply:

1. **Active Participation** - "Actively participated in" means playing in at least 50% of the scheduled games of any complete AYSO-approved primary program or qualified secondary program conducted during the 2026-2027 membership year.
 - a. Acceptable special circumstances that might prevent a registered player from completing a program would include, but are not limited to, an illness; a soccer-related injury; change of address (moved to a new Region); parental custodial rights; conflict with secondary or high school rules of state which prevent the registered

player from COMPLETING the primary program. If such a special circumstance arises, the Regional Commissioner must request approval, in writing, from the Area Director and/or Section Director prior to allowing the player to be rostered on a team participating in this tournament.

2. Scheduled Games – “Scheduled games” shall mean games that were scheduled for play at the beginning of the season and available for play (excludes games not available for play due to field closures or similar).

3. Primary Program - "Primary program" shall mean the entire set of scheduled games (including BOTH parts of split seasons) in a Region for which open registration is held, balanced teams are newly formed, and all registrants play. It is acknowledged that some Regions may have more than one primary program under this definition.

Each Regional Commissioner, Area Director and Section Director is responsible for ensuring that the spirit of the eligibility rules is honored. The National Games Organizing Committee (NGOC) reserves the right to determine and administer any discipline that they deem appropriate should they find that the participation of any team or player violates this intent. Disciplinary sanctions can include, but are not limited to, removing, or rejecting the offending team or player from participation in all or any part of the AYSO National Games.

COACH ELIGIBILITY

All AYSO coaches and assistant coaches (hereafter referred to collectively as coaches) who wish to coach in the AYSO National Games must, at a minimum:

- Be a registered volunteer in AYSO’S registration system of record for the current AYSO membership year.
- Have the AYSO’s Safe Haven certification.
- Have completed CDC concussion awareness training.
- Have completed Sudden Cardiac Training.
- Have completed Safe Sport Training.
- Have a current Green Risk Status.
- Be trained per the National Coaching Program Guidelines at the age level of the team they wish to coach. Training must be completed and verified in AYSO’S registration system of record by May 15, 2027, roster submission deadline.

Following are the required certifications for each of the age levels:

DIVISION	COACH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT
10U	10U Coach (Complete Course)
12U	12U Coach
14U	Intermediate Coach
16U/19U	Advanced Coach

- A coach or assistant coach may not be listed on more than one roster.
- Coaches who have taken ONLY the online course will **NOT BE ELIGIBLE** to coach. The field portion of that course must also be completed.
- Coaches are responsible for checking with their region to ensure that all completed courses have been properly credited prior to May 15, 2027.
- Each team may have no more than two coaches.
- Coaches must be 18 years of age or older.
- Approved coaches are the only people permitted to coach and to be in the coaching area on the fields.
- If a trainer is traveling with a team, they will not be permitted as a substitute coach for any reason and is not allowed in the coaching area.

TEAM FORMATION POLICY

Each Region/Area/Section shall determine the method it uses for team formation, provided that each team member is eligible following the rules listed in this document. All rostered team members must be eligible players as defined above.

A team roster may include up to two coaches, each of whom has met the Coaching Requirements described above. Only players and coaches listed on the approved roster may participate in the AYSO National Games.

Team Roster Sizes and Player Numbers on the Field

- The maximum roster size allowed in 16U/19U will be 22 and teams will play 11 v 11
- The maximum roster size allowed in 14U will be 22 and teams will play 11 v 11
- The maximum roster size allowed in 12U will be 18 and teams will play 9 v 9

- The maximum roster size allowed in 10U will be 14 and teams will play 7 v 7
- New max roster sizes

Age Divisions

The following age divisions participate in the AYSO National Games (DOBs for membership year 2026 games):

- **Core Divisions**



AYSO AGE DETERMINATION CHART

Membership Year 2026/27

Birth Year / Month	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
January	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
February	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
March	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
April	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
May	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
June	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
July	U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19	
August		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
September		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
October		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
November		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19
December		U4	U5	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U17	U18	U19

Everyone Plays | Balanced Teams | Open Registration | Positive Coaching | Good Sportsmanship | Player Development

U19: Birthdays 8/1/2007-7/31/2010

U16: Birthdays 8/1/2010-7/31/2012

U14: Birthdays 8/1/2012-7/31/2014

U12: Birthdays 8/1/2014-7/31/2016

U10: Birthdays 8/1/2016-7/31/2018

Teams with a mixture of boys and girls will be considered boys' teams.

Definition of Core Division

Teams participating in a Region's Standard Primary Program, including All-Star Teams, are eligible to play in the Core Division.

Region Standard Primary Program is defined as that set of scheduled matches in a Region for which open registration is held, balanced teams are formed, and all registrants play. The Region Standard Primary Program is the first time in each AYSO membership year (August 1 – July 31) for which team member registrations have been paid, national fees remitted, and insurance is in effect. Most Regions have their Standard Primary program only in fall; a small number have a winter or spring or summer Standard Primary program; a few have a different Standard Primary program time of year for each upper age gender based on the high school play season. Some Regions split their Standard Primary program into two sets of matches, usually due to weather and field issues. When the program is split, both sets of matches count toward a player's total participation in the Standard Primary program.

All-Star Teams: For purposes of the Core Division, an "All-Star" team is a team formed as an extension of the Standard Primary program (i.e., the first playing season in the Region in which all registered players participate) and which selects players for participation based primarily on their ability. All-Star Teams formed consistent with the above are eligible to play in the Core Division, including an All-Star Team that continues to play together in a Region, Area or Spring gaming circuit after the conclusion of All-Star play.

Currently, only participants in Standard Primary programs are eligible to participate in the Core Division.

Team Formation Limitations

Each team must be composed of eligible players from the applicable Region(s) who are age-appropriate for the age division selected in the Lottery Draw. Age eligibility is determined solely by the player's date of birth.

All eligible players from the Region that was offered a spot in the tournament MUST have the first opportunity to participate.

- **Exception 1:** If the selected Region is unable to form a complete team from age appropriate eligible players within the Region, the Region may, with permission from the Area Director, approach Regional Commissioners from other Regions in their own AYSO Area to seek additional eligible players, which requires each Regional Commissioner involved to sign off on the player's participation.
- **Exception 2:** Extraordinary circumstances might indicate the need to go to a neighboring AYSO Area to find a team member. This requires agreement by each of the Regional Commissioners, Area Directors, and Section Director(s) involved.

- **Exception 3:** Team members will be allowed to be added to a team roster not in their age-appropriate division only under circumstances as described in the “Playing up” section below.

Guest Player Policy

A player on an AYSO tournament team temporarily borrowed from a different AYSO team (if the competition is for Standard Primary program teams) or from a different AYSO Region than the one entering the team. A guest player must have a signed letter of approval from the Regional Commissioner of that player's home Region stipulating the tournament(s) in which the guest player may participate. A good rule of thumb is to limit guest players to three (3) on a roster unless extenuating circumstances are outlined and the necessary approval is granted. Each tournament has the authority to further limit or prohibit these types of players.

Playing Up

“Playing up” a division by a team member into an older age bracket than his/her birth date indicated in Age Divisions section above, will be permitted only under one of the following circumstances:

- Permitted in all the age brackets (except 10U) provided that the player played up in a membership year 2026/2027 primary program. Age-appropriate team members should be given priority in the selection process, and it is the responsibility of the Regional Commissioner to verify the eligibility of the “younger” team member to be playing in an older age bracket during the Region’s primary program. Regional Commissioners must NOT play younger children up for the express or singular purpose of participating in the AYSO National Games.

Play up to 14u must be old enough to head

- 10U teams may not utilize players who played in 8U during the primary program.
- “Playing Down” in a younger division than the player’s age is not permitted under any circumstances.
- Any request to Play Up must be approved by the applicable Section Director.

Regions must utilize their own Region’s age-appropriate registered players prior to asking for “exceptions.” Each player’s eligibility must be verified by the Regional Commissioner. Falsifying information pertaining to eligibility may result in expulsion of a team from the tournament prior to its start, or if discovered after the tournament starts, forfeiture of games the ineligible team member(s) participated as players and/or substitutes and zeroing out/ nullifying of sportsmanship points for games in which ineligible team member(s) participated.

Team Rosters

Rosters will only be accepted via electronic submission via the AYSO Affinity Sports platform.

Guidelines on how to generate and submit rosters will be available on the AYSO National Games website.

Initial rosters will be due on APRIL 15, 2027. A team that does not submit a roster by the due date will be considered to have withdrawn their acceptance and will be replaced by the next eligible team in the lottery. Roster changes will be accepted until JUNE 4, 2027. Rosters will be frozen and no further changes will be permitted.

STANDARDS FOR UNIFORMS AND PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Players will be required to follow the AYSO Uniform Specifications for the 2026- 2027 membership year. The specifications may be found at https://wiki.ayso.org/wiki/Uniform_Specifications

1. The AYSO uniform may bear an optional emblem representing Region, skills, local sponsor, Sportsmanship, tournament or event on the upper right sleeve or the lower front of the shorts. Such emblems shall be no more than three inches in diameter (or equivalent diagonal) and must be approved by the Marketing Dept **prior to check-in**.

Additional Uniform and Equipment Information

- Jewelry or adornment of any kind is not allowed. Jewelry or adornment includes: earrings, any hard replacement stud or other piercings worn in any visible body part; friendship, rubber sport, braided and other similar bracelets; hard metal or plastic items on clothing or hair, bobby pins; or ribbons, loops or loose strings in the hair. Taping of these items is not permitted and does not make them permissible to wear. • Hair Beads and Clips
Hair control devices and other adornments, such as beads, worn in the hair must meet the following criteria:
 - Be securely fastened to the head.
 - Do not present an increased risk to the player, teammates, or opponents. - Flat clips less than two inches in length may be used to hold the hair in place close to the head so long as their placement on the head does not present an increased risk to the player, teammates or opponents.
 - Hair charms are still considered jewelry and are not permitted.
- Soft, “scrunchy-type” or elastic hair control items are permitted.
- Medical alert bracelets are allowed. They should be secured to the player with tape, a cloth wristband or the equivalent taking care to leave the information visible and easily recognizable in case of emergency.

- AYSO will not prohibit the use of knee braces by players provided that, in the judgment of the referee, the brace is adequately covered and padded so as to eliminate the possibility of its causing injury to the other players on the field of play.
- The acceptable length and shape or adornment of fingernails is up to the judgment of the referee. In general, long, or fake fingernails are not to be considered dangerous by themselves. However, the use of such a deterrent should be sanctioned according to the severity of use. Knit gloves may be used by a player to cover nails judged to be dangerous. Primary focus should be on player safety.
- Goalkeepers may wear a soft brimmed hat or cap. In addition, the brim must also be made of a soft material and must be approved by the referee. Baseball-style caps with hard brims are not acceptable even if worn backwards. These items should be a neutral color free of inappropriate design, logo or meaning. They must not constitute a danger to the player or to other players and must be approved by the referee.
- Other uniform and equipment issues will be resolved in accordance with the *AYSO Regional Referee Manual* and the *Laws of the Game* for the current year. Questions should be asked prior to attendance at the Games so that any modifications or changes can be worked out in advance.

TEAM CHECK-IN

Team check-ins will be conducted on JULY 4 and JULY 5, 2027 . The exact times and location will be published to the tournament website (www.nationalgames.ayso.org) before June 1, 2027.

Coaches must bring the following to check-in their team:

- A copy of the team's rosters which has been signed by the applicable Regional Commissioner(s), Area director(s) and/or Section Director(s).
- Printed copies on Signed Medical Release Forms for each player on the roster. ○
Digital copies on a cellphone are not acceptable.
- One set of the player's uniform (primary/alternate jersey, short, socks) the team will be wearing throughout the tournament. If the team only has one jersey, the coach must bring an acceptable overlay, such as pinnies or scrimmage vests in material that allows for the player jersey numbers to be seen or are individually numbered.

All uniforms, including alternate jerseys or overlays, will be checked for compliance with the AYSO Uniform Specification. For any improper uniforms found during check-in, teams will be expected to make the necessary corrections before they will be allowed to participate.

Uniform Variance form if applicable.

- **Coach Driver's Licenses** will be reviewed during coach check in by administration. Coaches will be given a **wristband** that MUST be worn at all times throughout the tournament. Coach wristbands and game cards will also be checked at pre-game check ins by the referees.

Players DO NOT need to be present at the team check-in.

Further details and requirements about the team check-in process will be included in the newsletters sent to coaches.

SOCCKERFEST PARTICIPATION

The Soccerfest event creates an atmosphere for Good Sportsmanship, Camaraderie and Stewardship for the AYSO National Games and is a great kick-off event prior to the start of the AYSO National Games. Soccerfest is a fundamental and integral part of the spirit and experience of the AYSO National Games. Every player is enriched by interacting with players from other teams across the country, making new friends thereby adding to the excitement for everyone. All players and coaches are encouraged to participate in Soccerfest.

AYSO National Games teams (rostered players and coaches) are considered registered for Soccerfest once they RSVP by the stated deadline, at no additional cost.

Due to the large number of players attending AYSO National Games this year, Soccerfest will not be available for players who are not registered for AYSO National Games (i.e. siblings), or teams that did not RSVP on time.

Pool Play Points Awarded for Soccerfest

- A team coach may request that a rostered player or coach be excused from Soccerfest due to unusual or special circumstances. This request must be made to the NGOC no later than the team's check-in time.
- Each team will be awarded six (6) points in pool play standings for participation of its officially rostered players and coaches in both Soccerfest games (except for those players and coaches excused as noted above), provided that at least one coach and a minimum number of players from the team participate.
- Minimum number of players for Soccerfest participation are as follows:
 - 10U – 7 players

- 12U – 9 players
- 14U/16U/19U – 10 players
- Partial credit will not be awarded.
- Soccerfest points will be posted after Soccerfest within a reasonable time as established by the NGOC. Any challenge to the Soccerfest points must be made prior to the end of the last game on July 9, 2027. Any challenge received after the deadline, no matter the validity of the claim, will not be considered. Soccerfest points will be reflected in team points at the conclusion of pool play.

Soccerfest Method

- Coaches, team members and additional players who are registered for Soccerfest only, will be distributed into teams. Soccerfest teams will play two shortened games.
- Complete Soccerfest information will be provided to coaches prior to their arrival.

SPORTSMANSHIP

AYSO strives to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our programs are designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

Sportsmanship is how we play the game – how we follow the Laws and show respect for teammates, opponents, and officials. This is evidenced in applauding opponents' good performances, encouraging teammates and courtesy toward the referees. We expect our coaches, referees, team administrators, parents, and spectators to be our Stewards of the Game by modeling good sportsmanship, fair play and age-appropriate cheering during the games. Building character, confidence, self-esteem, and enjoyment in all aspects of a player's experience in AYSO are primary goals.

Because of the value that AYSO places on sportsmanship, sporting behavior and sportsmanship points are used to break ties in the standings, and Sportsmanship Awards are the highest honor of the AYSO National Games for all teams, including the AYSO Michalski Sportsmanship Cup, which is awarded to one team that demonstrates the highest level of sportsmanship out of all the teams participating in the Games.

Sportsmanship Monitoring Process

- Sportsmanship points will be awarded based upon the Sportsmanship Form in Exhibit “A” of this document. The referee team will score the Sportsmanship Form at the conclusion of each game based on their observation of coaches, players and supporters conduct before, during and immediately after the game.
- As a tiebreaker for the AYSO Michalski Sportsmanship Cup, the NGOC will offer additional observations of player, coach and spectator conduct and behavior reported throughout the Games and determine a winner.
- In each age division, the team that earns the highest point total over their pool play games will be honored for outstanding sportsmanship and all team members and coaches of those teams will receive medals. In the event of a tie, scores for each individual Sportsmanship attribute will be compared until the tie is broken.
- Teams proceeding into the medal rounds will have the opportunity to continue to demonstrate excellent sportsmanship, based on the same criteria used in pool play games. However, no additional Sportsmanship medals will be awarded for these games.

GAME FORMAT

Pool Play & Elimination Games

1. The structure of the pool, semifinal and finals games will be determined by the number of teams entered in each division.
2. Teams will play between five and seven games at the tournament.
 - a. AYSO National Games will include a combination of pool play, semifinal and finals games.
 - b. Teams will play no more than two per day.
3. Details regarding which teams will advance to the semifinals on Sunday can be found at the top of the standings page for each division.

Game Duration

Game durations will be as follows, unless the AYSO NGOC reduces the length of the halves due to playing conditions:

DIVISION	GAME DURATIONS (Round Robin Pool Games)
10U	Two – 20 Minute Halves
12U	Two – 25 Minute Halves
14U	Two – 25 Minute Halves
16U	Two – 25 Minute Halves
19U	Two – 25 Minute Halves

DIVISION	GAME DURATIONS (Semi-Final & Finals)
10U	Two – 25 Minute Halves
12U	Two – 30 Minute Halves
14U	Two – 35 Minute Halves
16U	Two – 40 Minute Halves
19U	Two – 45 Minute Halves

Pool Play Points

Points Per Game

Points during pool play will be awarded using the following criteria per AYSO

National Games:

- a. Six points for a win
- b. Three points for a tie (to each team)
- c. Zero points for a loss
- d. One point for a shutout
- e. One point to each team for each goal scored (up to 3)
- f. Minus three points deducted for each player, substitute or coach sent off. a. In the event a team receives no points for a game in which a sendoff has occurred, a negative point total shall be posted for that team for that game.
- g. Three points deducted from the winning team for any match with a goal differential of Six goals or more (i.e., 7-1 score = 3 point deduction)

h. In the event of a forfeit, the winning score shall be 1-0, with the winner awarded eight points.

Soccerfest Participation Bonus Points

Six points will be awarded to a team's pool play points total for proper participation in Soccerfest (see Page 10 for details).

Pool Play Tiebreakers

In the event that two or more teams have the same number of points when determining which teams will be advancing beyond pool play, the following tiebreaker rules in order:

1. The winner in head-to-head competition.
2. Most total wins
3. Fewest goals against
4. Most shut outs.
5. Fewest Red Cards
6. Most Sportsmanship Points
7. FIFA Kicks From The Mark

SEMIFINAL AND FINALS MATCHES ENDING IN A TIE

Matches tied at the end of regulation time will be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, with only players who remained on the field of play at the end of the match eligible to participate in the shootout.

PRE-GAME CHECK-IN

Teams shall report to their assigned field at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled game start time. The referees will check photos on game cards and coach wristbands, and check uniforms and equipment before each game.

Pre-printed game cards will be provided to the referees by the NGOC. Adding players (handwritten) to the pre-printed game card is not allowed unless authorized by the AYSO National Games Registrar.

Both teams (Players, Coaches, Team Managers) will occupy the same sideline. The Home Team will occupy the North or East half of the sideline and the Away Team the South or West Side. The team listed first on the schedule is the HOME team. Players and coaches must remain in their designated technical areas throughout the match.

Spectators will occupy the opposite sideline. Spectators may only occupy the half of the sideline directly across from the team they are supporting (Home Team on the North or East half and the Away Team the South or West Side). Spectators must also remain behind the spectator line and between the penalty areas. Spectator area lines will be marked on the field

for easy reference.

The HOME team will be required to wear their alternate jersey/overlay in case of a color conflict with the VISITOR team.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND PLAYING TIME

Except as described in this section, the AYSO substitution rules found in Section I.C. of the National Rules and Regulations and reproduced as an appendix to this document shall be used in all age divisions. Every player must play at least half of each game. All coaches are strongly encouraged to give every player the opportunity to play three quarters before any player plays four quarters. Injury and illness will be considered but must be verified and annotated on the game card by the referee.

Monitored (Free) Substitution: Monitored Substitution will only be permitted in the 19U and 16U divisions.

FORFEITS

There will be a five-minute grace period at the start of each game. The grace period may be extended if circumstances warrant. The AYSO National Game will be declared a forfeit only after the referee and Field Monitors have confirmed with the NGOC or designee that the circumstances warrant a forfeiture. A 0 - 1 forfeit loss will be assigned to the forfeiting team. If a referee must suspend or terminate a game, the NGOC will determine the outcome of the game.

No game shall start or continue if either team has fewer than five players in 10U, six players in 12U and seven players in 14U through 19U present and ready to play.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

U.S. Soccer Respect the Ref Campaign

Coaches and parents are reminded that full compliance with U.S. Soccer's *Respect The Call* ([Link to Respect the Call Initiative](#)) initiative is required throughout this tournament. This initiative reinforces the critical importance of treating referees with respect and upholding a positive, sportsmanlike environment. Disrespectful conduct—such as disputing calls, using hostile language, or confronting referees—will be addressed under U.S. Soccer's Referee Abuse and Assault Policy. The *Referee Abuse and Assault Matrix* outlines consequences ranging from immediate ejection and multi-game suspensions for verbal abuse, to longer-term suspensions or bans for physical or threatening behavior. Details on the initiative are available at ussoccer.com/respect, and the full abuse matrix can be reviewed at ussoccer.com/referee

abuse-matrix.

A summary of penalties—found in U.S. Soccer’s **Referee Abuse Penalty Overview** ([link to PDF](#))—provides clear guidelines for misconduct consequences. Verbal abuse may result in a minimum two-game suspension, while threats or intimidation toward referees carry a minimum six-month suspension. Physical contact, such as pushing or grabbing, can lead to suspensions of at least one year or more. Parents and coaches must understand that their conduct has direct consequences and that setting a respectful example is essential for protecting the integrity of the game and the well-being of referees—many of whom are young or new to officiating. For additional information, consult U.S. Soccer’s Referee FAQ at ussoccer.com/referee-faq. ([RAP FAQ Final](#))

For additional information, consult U.S. Soccer’s Referee Abuse Prevention Policy at ussoccer.com/rap.

Team Members

Any team member who is sent off must leave the field of play and the immediate area before play is restarted and must be accompanied by a parent or Safe Haven trained adult. The qualified adult must follow Safe Haven protocol and not be isolated with the minor athlete. The team may not substitute for that player for the remainder of the game. If there is no parent or qualified adult to accompany the team member, he/she will remain silent on the sideline and may not participate in the hand shake at the end of the game.

Any team member who is sent off before, during or after a game, will be ineligible to participate in the team’s next scheduled game. Depending on the severity of the action that resulted in the sendoff, the NGOC may review the circumstances and issue greater sanctions against the offending team member.

Any team member receiving two send offs during the AYSO National Games shall have the offenses reviewed by the NGOC and may be denied further participation in the AYSO National Games.

Coaches

A coach who is expelled by the referee must leave the field of play and the immediate area for the remainder of the current AYSO National Game and for the next scheduled game. Depending on the severity of the action that resulted in the sendoff, the NGOC may review the circumstances and issue greater sanctions against the offending coach.

Player Medical Release Forms must be in the possession of the remaining registered coach. If the coach refuses to leave, or there is no remaining coach or assistant coach, the referee may terminate the game. When the game is terminated, the NGOC will decide the outcome of the game. Any coach expelled from more than one game will be suspended for the balance of the tournament.

Spectators

Spectators or other guests who are asked to leave the field by the referee, assigned field monitor or other Games official must do so immediately. If a spectator or guest refuses to leave, the referee may suspend or terminate the game. The NGOC will be responsible for determining the outcome of the match. A forfeit win may be awarded to the opposing team.

Points Deducted in Standings

Three points will be deducted from the team's pool play standings for each player, coach, or spectator sent off and sportsmanship points will be adversely affected.

Additional Sanctions

All send offs, expulsions and cautions will be reviewed by the NGOC, which may decide to issue additional sanctions.

REFEREES

Overview

- Only AYSO referees that have been cleared by the tournament's Referee Administration Team are permitted to participate at the tournament.
- The diagonal system of control, utilizing a referee and two assistant referees will be used on all matches.
- Every effort will be made to avoid assigning a referee to a game involving one or both teams from the referee's own Region or Area.
- Players participating in the tournament may not participate as referees.

Further details and requirements about the team check-in process will be included in the newsletters sent to referees.

Check-In and Assignments

- All referees must check in at the referee administration tent prior to their first assigned match of the tournament. Before each match, referees must also check in at the designated referee match check-in locations. All check-in locations will be identified on the site map.
- Tournament Referee Administrator will be available and will make assignment adjustments as necessary. All referee game assignments will be posted. Referee teams shall report to their assigned fields at least twenty (20) minutes prior to the game start time.
- Referees shall officiate each game in accordance with IFAB Laws of the Game except as

modified by AYSO in the AYSO National Rules and Regulations or these tournament guidelines.

- The match scores and Sportsmanship ratings as recorded on the game cards shall be the official result of the game. Referees shall submit all game cards as instructed at the end of each game. The game cards will be available for completing any paperwork or reports at the tournament headquarters.
- No protests of games, official rulings or judgment calls shall be allowed. The NGOC shall have the final say in any complaint or issue that arises. All decisions are final.

DISPOSITION OF ABANDONED OR TERMINATED GAMES

If any pool play AYSO National Games cannot be played due to circumstances beyond the control of the tournament, the final standings of the pool will be determined by applying the following winning percentage (WP) formula.

$$\text{(Total Pool Play Points + SoccerFest Points) / (Number of Pool AYSO National Games Played)}$$

The NGOC will decide on accounting for the AYSO National Games which could not start or be rescheduled due to adverse weather conditions or other circumstances. They will endeavor to reschedule or resume games that are incomplete due to weather related reasons. However, due to situations that cannot be predicted in advance, it may not be possible to finish incomplete games. All questions regarding rescheduling, including decisions on forfeits will be at the discretion of the NGOC whose decision shall be final.

AWARDS

Medals shall be presented to the First through 4th place teams in all divisions and brackets. Consolation games or just semifinalist medals for 3-4

The AYSO Michalski Sportsmanship Cup and Sportsmanship medals will be awarded as outlined in the Sportsmanship section of this document.

TOURNAMENT FEES

The registration fee for the AYSO National Games is as follows:

- 10U Divisions: \$850
- 12U Divisions: \$1,000
- 14U Divisions: \$1,200
- 16U/19U Divisions: \$1,500

REFUND POLICY

In the very unlikely event that the AYSO National Games are cancelled, all registered teams will receive full refunds of their team registration fee. Memorabilia that is pre-ordered and paid for by teams will be distributed.

- For any team that withdraws before February 1, 2027, or within 30 days of accepting a lottery invitation, a full refund of the registration fee will be provided.
- If a team withdraws after February 1, 2027 and after the expiration of the 30-day period, but prior to May 1, 2027, there will be a 50% refund of the registration fee.
- If a team withdraws after May 1, 2027, there will be no refund.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COACHES AND SPECTATORS

- Weapons, alcohol, tobacco (including “vapor” or “e-cigarettes”), other controlled substances and noise makers are not allowed at the facility.
- Pets are not allowed on any fields or common areas in any facilities.

RULES INTERPRETATION & AMENDMENTS

The NGOC will decide any situations or subjects not covered by these Guidelines. Decisions will be made with the spirit and best interests of AYSO National Games in mind, and will be communicated to participants at the event if not published in subsequent revisions to these Guidelines. Questions about these Rules should be addressed to nationalgames@aysonationalgames.org.

REFEREE SPORTSMANSHIP REPORT/RATING CRITERIA

Referee’s Sportsmanship report/match report card will be a page in your per-game packet. There will be a photo-roster for each team and referee Game report.

play for substitution while the ball is in play, in which case the game is resumed with a dropped ball.

- b. Substitutions may also be made at half-time and at the start of any overtime periods.
- c. When the referee signals for substitution, the coaches should have all substitutes entering the game immediately report to the referee or the designated assistant referees, who shall note on the lineup cards those team members substituting.
- d. During such stoppages, the coach of each team may substitute as many team members, or none, including previously substituted team members, as long as all eligible team members meet the minimum playing requirements.
- e. The referee shall allow for any time lost due to substitution or other cause by stopping his/her watch or adding playing time. (See NR&R Article I.B.4. regarding reducing the length of halves to permit proper substitution.)

2. Substitution for injury:

- a. If a player is injured, the coach may provide a substitute for the player, in which case the injured player may not return until the beginning of the next "quarter". Only the player who is injured is credited with a "quarter" played regardless of the actual time played.
- b. The coach may choose to not substitute and "play short" thereby allowing the injured player to return during the "quarter" in which he or she was injured.
- c. The player must receive a signal from the referee in order to return to the game.

3. Late arriving team members shall be substituted as follows:

- a. If the team member arrives during the first "quarter", the team member must play a minimum of two of the remaining three "quarters".
- b. If the team member arrives during the second or third "quarter", the team member must play a minimum of one "quarter".

4. Monitored Free Substitution shall not apply to 14U divisions and teams are expected to substitute players as detailed above.