

# 2026 Rules & Guidelines

## *Mississippi Soccer Association – Recreation All-Star Palooza Event*

### Event Overview

- **Former Name:** Recreational Open Cup
- **Updated Name:** Recreational All-Star Palooza

### Eligibility

- **Registration Fee PAID IN FULL prior to the event**
- **Recreational players only.**
- **No competitive players** permitted under any circumstance.
- **No guest players allowed—no exceptions.**
- All players must come from their **home club**.
  - *No players may be added from other clubs.*

### Roster Verification

- MSA will **cross-reference all team rosters in GotSport** to confirm player classification and eligibility.

### Team Formation

- Clubs may form All-Star teams in any manner that best fits their club's internal structure.
- Coaches must work directly with **club leadership and registrars** to follow club-specific formation procedures and requirements.

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## Rosters & Eligibility

### Roster Freeze

- Rosters must be submitted by the **official Roster Freeze Date** for the seasonal year.

### Eligibility Requirements

Teams must meet **all MSA requirements** listed below:

1. **Club Membership Compliance**
  - The member organization must have:
    - Completed the **Annual Membership Application**, and
    - Paid the **annual membership fee**,  
by the deadline set by the MSA Council for the seasonal year.
2. **Player Eligibility Restrictions**
  - No player participating with a **non-USYS team** may participate.
  - No player rostered on **any USSF competitive team** may play in **any** MSA recreational event.

### 3. Coach Eligibility Requirements

- Only coaches who meet **all MSA registration standards** may be listed on rosters.
  - Required coach qualifications:
    - A **current profile photo**
    - Approved **background check**
    - Completed **SafeSport** training
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## Official Rosters (Required)

- Rosters **must be official** and generated by the **club registrar**.
  - **Unofficial or self-created rosters will not be accepted.**
  - Only teams with **verified MSA Official Rosters** will be accepted into the event.
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## Age-Group Eligibility

Eligibility is determined by **birth year for the 25/26 season**. (*Soccer Age = 2026 minus Birth Year*)

- Clubs who transitioned to **seasonal year** during 25/26 season will compete in the age group of the oldest rostered player.
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## Rec Plus Player Allowance

- Recreational players rostered on a **Rec Plus team** for the seasonal year **may participate as All-Stars** on an All-Star roster.
  - However:
    - **Rec Plus teams themselves may NOT participate.**
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## Player Eligibility

- Recreational players rostered on a **Rec Plus** team may participate as **All-Stars**, but **Rec Plus teams** themselves **may NOT** participate.
  - **MSA-approved roster is required.** Failure to provide an approved roster is grounds for disqualification.
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## Roster Limits

- Roster limits must follow **US Youth Soccer** player/rostering policies ([www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org))
  - Roster = Field players x 2
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# Rules of Play

## General

- **Laws:** FIFA Laws of the Game, modified by USYS.
  - **50% Playing Rule:**
    - Every player must play **at least 50%** of the game.
    - Referee must note playing time on the participation card.
    - Injured players are exempt; any player removed is considered to have completed that full quarter/half.
  - **No free substitutions** (only injury-based where allowed).
  - **Completion of Game:**
    - A game is “complete” after one half is played—even if the second half is terminated later.
  - **Participation Cards:**
    - Must list all players (first/last name, jersey number in numerical order).
    - Must be completed for **each quarter/half**.
    - Must be signed by **referee and winning coach**.
    - Turned in by referee to MSA staff; scores will be entered into **GotSport**.
  - **Ties:**
    - Preliminary games may end in a tie.
    - Semi-Finals/Finals: Tied → **Kicks from the Mark** (best of 5, then 1-for-1).
    - All players on roster may participate.
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## 5v5 Modifications (8U)

- **Deliberate heading:** Not allowed → Indirect Free Kick (IFK).
- **Fouls** result in Indirect Free Kick
- **Free Kicks:** all kicks are indirect and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is play.
- **Throw-in:** Improperly performed throw-in can be retaken once.
- **Goal kick:** Opponents must remain outside the build out line
- **Goal Keeper:** Allowed
- **Build-out Line:**
  - Opponents must retreat behind build-out line during GK possession or goal kicks.
  - GK may pass/throw/roll only (no punts/drop-kicks).
  - Offside judged between build-out line and goal line.
  - Punts/drop-kicks → IFK at spot (or goal area line if necessary).
  - Referees may be lenient with 6-second rule until opponents retreat.
  - Build-out line placed halfway between penalty area and halfway line.

## 7v7 Modifications (10U)

- **Deliberate heading:** Not allowed → Indirect Free Kick (IFK).
- **Build-out Line:**
  - Opponents must retreat behind build-out line during GK possession or goal kicks.
  - GK may pass/throw/roll only (no punts/drop-kicks).

- Offside judged between build-out line and goal line.
- Punts/drop-kicks → IFK at spot (or goal area line if necessary).
- Referees may be lenient with 6-second rule until opponents retreat.
- Build-out line placed halfway between penalty area and halfway line.
- **Kickoff:** Goals cannot be scored directly.

## 9v9 Modifications (12U)

- **Deliberate heading:** Not allowed.
  - Header offense in the goal area → IFK from nearest point on goal area line.
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## Coach & Team Responsibilities

- Follow **RAPP Policy**
    - [Referee Abuse Prevention \(RAP\) - Mississippi Soccer Association](#)
  - Comply with all tournament rules and codes of conduct.
  - Zero tolerance for abusive/foul language.
  - Coach responsible for team, manager, and spectators.
  - Home team must change jerseys if color conflict exists.
    - T-shirts with taped/written numbers are acceptable as alternates.
    - Pinnies may be worn over jerseys in the event of no alternate jersey
  - Coaches must remain within **10 yards of midfield line**.
  - Home team selects bench side.
  - Seating arrangement:
    - Teams on one side; spectators on opposite side.
    - Opposing spectators may **not** intermingle.
  - **Mechanical noisemakers are prohibited** (bullhorns, cowbells, megaphones, vuvuzelas, etc.).
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## Other Rules of Play

- No alcohol. No Smoking. No vaping. No Firearms.
  - MSA Administration resolves any situation not covered in these rules.
  - Only credentialed team members may speak with Tournament Director.
  - Playing Formats (per USSF & USYS):
    - U8 → 5v5
    - U10 → 7v7
    - U12 → 9v9
    - U14–U19 → 11v11 or 7v7 options
  - No cross-bracketing.
  - Referees report ejections to Tournament HQ.
  - Awards: Champion & Finalist teams receive individual awards up to roster max + 3 coaches.
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## International Walk-Out

- Finals begin with all rostered players walking out from the half line on bench side.
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## Game Length

- **8U**: Four 10 minute quarters
- **10U**: Four 12-minute quarters
- **12U**: Four 15-minute quarters
- **14U**: Four 17-minute quarters
- **16U**: Four 20-minute quarters
- **19U**: Four 22-minute quarter

## Game Day Procedures

### Registration Check-In

- Check in **1 hour before first game**.
- Coach/manager signs roster and receives participation cards, rosters, bench credentials.
- Failure to check in may cause disqualification.

### Credentials

- 3 bench passes per rostered coach/manager.
- 3 participation cards issued per team

### Player Equipment

- Referee conducts safety check.
  - Referee has final say on casts, braces, etc.
  - **No jewelry.**
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### Discipline

- 2 cautions in a match → Red card.
  - Sent-off player cannot be replaced; must sit out next match.
  - Violent conduct → Minimum 2-match suspension.
  - Ejected coaches must be out of sight/sound; violations → removal from tournament.
  - Referee assault → removal from event.
  - Participation rule violations → team expulsion & coach suspension.
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## Suspended/Terminated Games

- May resume if conditions permit and finish 5 minutes before next kickoff.
  - Weather suspensions:
    - If  $\geq 1$  half completed  $\rightarrow$  score stands.
    - If  $< 1$  half completed  $\rightarrow$  match may be replayed same day or next.
    - Second stoppage in a day  $\rightarrow$  terminated.
  - Misconduct-terminated games  $\rightarrow$  team forfeits remaining matches.
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## Injuries & Time

- All games use a **running clock**.
  - Additional time only if approved by event officials.
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## Referee Decisions

- Referee decisions on play are **final**.
  - A decision may be changed only before play restarts.
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## Standings & Advancement

### Point System (Max 7 per game)

- Win = 3
- Tie = 1
- Loss = 0
- Shutout = 1
- Goals = 1 point per goal (max 3)
- Ejection =  $-1$  per player/coach

A 0–0 tie = **2 points** (tie + shutout).

### Tiebreakers

1. Head-to-Head (if 2 teams)
2. Goal Differential ( $\pm 4$  max per game)
3. Fewest goals allowed
4. Most wins
5. Penalty kicks

For 3+ team ties, apply criteria 2–5 until reduced to 2 teams, then restart at #1.

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## Home & Visitor Protocol

### Home Team

- Listed first.
- Provides 2 game balls:
  - U8: Size 3
  - U10–U12: Size 4
  - U14+: Size 5
- Chooses bench.
- Referee decides kickoff direction.

### Visiting Team

- Listed second.

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## Forfeits

A team forfeits **all games** if it forfeits any one game.  
Score recorded as 3-0.

A game is forfeited if a team:

- Leaves field without referee permission.
- Is not ready within 5 minutes of game time.
- Refuses to change jersey.
- Violates 50% participation rule.
- Is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Lacks minimum players.
- Fails to provide approved roster.
- Causes termination due to misconduct.

### Penalties may include:

- Coach/manager suspension for one year.
  - Organization fined minimum \$500.
  - Additional tie-breaker effects may apply.
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## Protests & Disputes

- No protests on referee decisions.
  - Off-field disputes resolved by Tournament Director; decisions final.
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## Refund Policy

- No refunds after acceptance unless approved for special circumstances.
  - If approved, refunded minus payment processing fees.
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## Inclement Weather Policy

- Safety and field conditions determine decisions.
  - Game times may be shortened.
  - "Mini-game" (Kicks from the Mark) may determine results.
  - Games may be canceled for teams with no advancement path.
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## Tournament Format

- MSA may adjust schedules/formats as needed based on registered teams and divisions.
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## Appeals & Fair Play

- Any unlisted matter decided by Tournament Director.
  - Only coaches may file formal complaints.
  - Zero tolerance for cheating—team removed immediately and banned from future events.
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## Quick Action Items for Teams

- Coordinate with your club registrar to produce and submit your **Official MSA Roster**.
- Ensure **all players are recreational** (NO competitive players allowed)
- Book hotels if needed for Vicksburg MS.
- Observe **Roster Freeze as posted on MSA Website Tournament Page**