



US YOUTH SOCCER™
MISSISSIPPI
STATE CUP
2026

2026 U13-U19 Information, Rules, & Procedures

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1. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. The U13-U19 USYS Mississippi State Cup is facilitated by the Mississippi Soccer Association (MSA) and serves as a qualifying competition for teams pursuing advancement within US Youth Soccer (USYS) national competitions.

1.1.1.1. At the time of registration, teams must declare their competition pathway—either the USYS National Championships or the USYS Presidents Cup.

1.1.1.2. Teams that qualify will advance to the appropriate USYS event based on their declared pathway, in accordance with MSA, USYS Mississippi State Cup, and USYS rules.

1.2. Eligibility

1.2.1. The USYS Mississippi State Cup is open to all U13-U19 MSA “Competitive” & “Rec Plus” Teams.

1.3. Registration

1.3.1. The team registration deadline will be established by the MSA Office Staff and posted on the MSA Website.

1.3.2. By registering, teams must select either the USYS President Cup pathway or the USYS National Championship Series pathway and commit to advancing within that pathway if they qualify.

1.4. Fees & Fines

1.4.1. The team entry fee will be established by the MSA Office Staff and posted on the MSA Website.

1.4.1.1. The team entry fee is non-refundable and required for each participating team.

1.4.2. If a team withdraws from the tournament after being accepted, a \$500 fine will be invoiced to the team’s home organization. This fine must be paid prior to the team’s home organization’s participation in the current USYS Mississippi State Cup.

1.4.3. If a team does not fulfill the requirement to attend the USYS event for which they qualify, a \$1000 fine will be invoiced to the team’s home organization and the team will be declined to participate in upcoming MSA and USYS Events.

1.5. Team Rosters, Passes, & Team Bench Credentials

1.5.1. Match day rosters must include between 9 and 22 players, with 22 players being the maximum number of players allowed to participate. Teams will have up to four (4) club-specific credentialed team officials.

1.5.2. All Team Rosters are frozen at least 14 days prior to the USYS Mississippi State Cup Tournament. No additional players may be added after the roster freeze date.

1.5.2.1. All Official USYS Team Rosters and Team Bench Credentials will be printed by the MSA Office Staff and provided to each team at Team Check-In.

1.5.2.2. Each team is responsible for printing, laminating, and bringing their Official USYS Player/Team Official Passes.

1.6. Team Check-In

1.6.1. Team Check-In will take place at Tournament Headquarters.

1.6.2. All teams must check-in at least one (1) hour prior to their respective first USYS Mississippi State Cup game.

1.6.3. All teams must review and approve their respective Official USYS Team Roster and pick up their Team Bench Credentials at Team Check-In.

1.7. Decorum

1.7.1. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of themselves, their coaching staff, parents/spectators, and their players.

1.7.2. Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game.

1.7.3. When an offense is committed by a team official and the offender cannot be identified, the head coach will receive the disciplinary sanction.

1.7.4. 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 MSA, USYS, and the Tournament.

1.8. Committees

1.8.1. The Tournament Committee (TC) is responsible for the management of discipline and *Protests*.

1.8.2. Tournament Appeals Committee (TAC) is responsible for the management of all *Appeals* regarding Tournament Committee (TC) decisions.

2. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

2.1. Format

2.1.1. Bracket Play - Brackets will be established by the MSA State Office Staff and posted on the MSA Website.

2.1.1.1. In a 3-team bracket, the match between the #2 and #3 seeds may be scheduled on Qualification Weekend instead of Finals Weekend, but only if both teams agree in writing. If they do not agree, the match will be scheduled on Finals Weekend.

2.2. Seeding and Scheduling of Games

2.2.1. The MSA Office Staff are responsible for the seeding and scheduling of all USYS Mississippi State Cup Games.

2.2.2. The schedule will be posted at least 5 days prior to the first weekend of the USYS Mississippi State Cup.

2.2.3. If a team withdraws from the USYS Mississippi State Cup after being accepted, the team may or may not be replaced. The scheduled opponent could receive a "bye game".

2.2.4. The best scheduling to ensure maximum rest for each team is to play one (1) game per day. All teams are entitled to sufficient rest between games. If it is necessary to schedule two (2) games on the same day, four (4) and one-half (1/2) hours between the scheduled start of two (2) successive games is deemed sufficient rest.

2.2.5. Within the limits imposed by these rules and guidelines and by uncontrollable external conditions, the schedule will be developed objectively with no favoritism shown to specific teams.

2.2.6. Seeding will be determined as follows:

2.2.6.1. The first round of seeding will be determined based on the USYS Mid South Premier I Final conference standings. The top ranked MS team in Mid South Premier I will be seeded number one.

2.2.6.2. If standings aren't finalized by the Monday preceding the first weekend of the State Cup, current standings will be used. If there is only one team representing Mississippi in Premier I, that team will be seeded before proceeding to the next round.

2.2.6.3. The next round of seeding will be determined by BLIND DRAW. Once seeding is set, age divisions with 5 or more teams will require 4th seeded teams and up to play on Qualification Weekend. Teams seeded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd will play Finals Weekend only. MSA Sanctioned Tournament,

2.3. Advancement

2.3.1. Team advancement is in accordance with established brackets.

2.3.2. A team that forfeits any USYS Mississippi State Cup game will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.

2.3.2.1. The scheduled opponent of the forfeiting team will be declared the winning team.

2.3.2.2. A fine will be assessed by the TC to the forfeiting team in cases where the forfeit was deemed avoidable.

2.3.3. Manipulating match results will result in forfeiture and disqualification at all levels of the competition. Match Manipulation fines may also be assessed.

3. **LAWS OF THE GAME:** Except as otherwise provided herein, the rules of USYS and FIFA Laws of the Game shall apply.

3.1. Law 1: The Field of Play

3.1.1. Team and Spectator Location

3.1.1.1. The teams will sit on the opposite side of the field from the spectators. This may be adjusted as needed by MSA.

3.1.1.2. Spectators are to remain on the half of the pitch across from their own team's bench. No encroachment to an opposing side is allowed by any spectator or team official.

3.1.2. Team Bench and Sidelines

3.1.2.1. Rostered players and up to four (4) club-specific credentialed team officials may be on the bench. The Team Bench Credentials will be issued at Team Check-In.

3.2. Law 2: The Ball

3.2.1. Each team shall be able to provide a game ball at each game that meets USYS requirements. The decision on which ball will be used is the responsibility of the referee. Once the game begins, a protest cannot be lodged because of an illegal ball.

3.3. Law 3: The Players

3.3.1. Substitutions

3.3.1.1. U13 & U14 **Unlimited** substitutions over **three moments** per **half** plus halftime.

3.3.1.2. U15 – U18/19: **Unlimited** substitutions over **four moments** per **match** plus halftime.

3.3.1.3. Substitutions can occur at any stoppage with the referee's approval. Re-entry is permitted at designated substitution points or at any time during play if the referee permits.

3.3.1.4. Concussion/Head Injury Substitution Policy: If a player is suspected of having a concussion, they may be temporarily replaced so they can be evaluated by a qualified health professional. The temporary substitute does not count toward the team's normal substitution limits.

If the player is cleared, they may return to the match, and the temporary substitute player must come off. No substitution is charged to the team.

If the player is not cleared and permanently removed, the change becomes a concussion substitution. In that case, both teams receive one additional substitution, and the opponent can make one additional substitution of one, singular player.

3.3.2. Substitution Procedure

3.3.2.1. Game Day Rosters

3.3.2.1.1. The Game Day Roster will have a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 18 eligible players. Teams will designate their eligible players at the field if there are more than 18 rostered players. Any player serving a suspension **MUST** be included in the 18 eligible players on the Game Day Roster.

3.3.2.2. Player/ Team Official Passes

3.3.2.2.1. The referee will review each team's designated/eligible USYS Passes in accordance with their respective Game Day Roster prior to the beginning of the game. Before each half, the referee or assistant referee (AR) will receive the USYS Passes from a team official for the starting 11 players. When a substitute player enters the game, they will hand their USYS Pass to the AR. All USYS Passes will be returned to the team official after each half. **It will be the responsibility of the team official to obtain the passes at the end of the game.**

3.3.2.2.2. While on the bench, Coaches/Team Officials must always have their USYS Pass accessible, and Team Bench Credential visible (around their neck).

3.3.2.2.3. If a teams' USYS Passes cannot be produced at the start of a game, the TC will determine appropriate action.

3.4. Law 4: The Players' Equipment

3.4.1. All players must wear commercially manufactured shin guards. The referee is the sole judge of allowed player equipment as prescribed by the FIFA Laws of the Game.

3.4.2. Uniforms

3.4.2.1. Each player must wear an official uniform with a number displayed on the back of the jersey.

3.4.2.2. Numbers are not required on goalkeeper jerseys.

3.4.2.3. Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from other players and game officials.

3.4.2.4. Duplicate numbers or tape on uniforms is not permitted.

3.4.2.5. Each team must have two (2) complete uniform kits onsite, including socks (one light, one dark).

3.4.2.5.1. HOME Teams wear LIGHT-colored jersey and socks.

3.4.2.5.2. AWAY Teams wear DARK-colored jersey and socks.

3.4.2.5.3. If there is a conflict, the team in the incorrect color will be required to change.

3.4.2.5.4. If both teams are wearing the correct colors (home-light, away-dark) but the referee determines a color conflict, the home team must change.

3.4.2.6. At every level of the USYS NCS, each player, team and team official may only have on his/her/their apparel the name, logo, or other identifying mark of USYS or a member directly or indirectly of USYS.

3.4.2.6.1. A name, logo, or other identifying mark of any youth soccer organization other than USYS 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 competition is being held.

3.4.2.6.2. After an initial warning, the name, logo, or other identifying mark of any youth soccer organization other than USYS or its member must be removed before the player, team or team official may enter or continue in the competition.

3.4.2.6.3. The referee's decision is final.

3.5. Law 7: The Duration of the Match

3.5.1. Periods of Play

3.5.1.1. U13-U14: 35-minute halves

3.5.1.2. U15-U16: 40-minute halves

3.5.1.3. U17-U19: 45-minute halves

3.5.2. Unfinished Games

3.5.2.1. Unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed, provided neither team is at fault and play has not begun in the second half. If play is stopped after completion of the first half and cannot be resumed as determined by the Referee/ TC, and provided neither team is at fault, the TC may deem the game complete. Should play be stopped at any time due to one of the teams being adjudged at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the TC as to whether the game is to be replayed, stand as is, or declared a forfeit.

3.5.3. Terminated/Suspended Games

3.5.3.1. Once play has begun, games may only be terminated/suspended by the TC.

3.6. Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

3.6.1. Grace Period: Any team not ready to play at the assigned game field and time, shall be granted a fifteen (15)-minute grace period. Any team not ready to play after this grace period has expired shall be reported to the TC by the referee. The TC shall decide when a forfeit is declared. A minimum of seven (7) players constitutes a team.

3.7. Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

3.7.1. All games must have a winner and a loser. There are no ties.

3.7.1.1. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, the game will proceed directly to penalty kicks.

3.7.2. Game Cards

3.7.2.1. The Game Card is the official record for each USYS Mississippi State Cup Game. They are to be signed by both team officials and the referee at the field upon completion of a respective game. This is submitted at tournament headquarters to the TC.

3.8. Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct

3.8.1. Ejections

8.1.1.1. A Player Ejection:

8.1.1.1.1. Players receiving a red card or sent off during a match are prohibited from participating in at least the next match for their Primary rostered team and may not play any other matches until the ban is served, across both State and National levels. They may face additional suspension based upon severity.

8.1.1.1.2. A player who is sent off from the field must remain in the team bench area until the conclusion of the match. A team official is responsible for the behavior of their players at all times. If the sent off player cannot be controlled by a Team Official, the Referee may require the removal of the player from the entire field area. If such a player is removed from the field area, a Team Official or parent must supervise the player away from the field area.

8.1.1.1.3. The player's USYS Pass, together with the completed referee report, shall be turned over to tournament headquarters by the referee.

8.1.1.1.4. Any appeal of an increased suspension made by the TC must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Appeals Committee (TAC) within two hours of notification of increased suspension.

8.1.1.1.5. If an ejected player participates in the game they are required to sit out, their team will automatically forfeit that game.

8.1.1.1.6. A player is allowed to serve their suspension at the game on the team bench, provided they are not in uniform.

8.1.1.1.7. A member of the TC or their designee shall notify the player's team representative of the send-off. The player's USYS Pass shall be returned to the team representative following the disciplinary period.

8.1.1.2. Coach or Credentialed Team Representative Ejection:

8.1.1.2.1. Coaches, officials, and individuals associated with the team—including spectators—are subject to misconduct rules. Any misconduct, abusive behavior, or violent conduct reported by referees must be addressed in writing, with disciplinary action taken as per US Youth Soccer policies and US Soccer Referee Abuse Prevention Policy (531-9).

8.1.1.2.2. If a coach or credentialed team official is ejected from any game, he/she must move out of sight and sound of the field and may not coach another team during the time slot for which they were ejected. The ejected coach or credentialed official may not be in sight or sound of the field while serving their suspension.

8.1.1.3. Player and Coach Suspension

8.1.1.3.1. Any player, coach or bench personnel who have been suspended may appeal the decision to the TC in the event this is a misapplication of the rules. This appeal must be made within two hours of notification of the suspension.

4. PROTESTS

- 4.1. All questions relating to the qualifications of the competitors or interpretation of the rules, or any dispute or protest shall be referred to the Tournament Committee (TC).
- 4.2. Validity
 - 4.2.1. To be valid and eligible for consideration:
 - 4.2.1.1. All protests relating to the ground, goal posts, bars or other appurtenances of the games 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.
 - 4.2.1.2. All protests must be filed in writing with the TC within two (2) hours of the completion of the game in protest and must include:
 - 4.2.1.2.1. A fee in the amount of \$300. This fee may be in cash, cashier's check, or money order. Personal checks will not be accepted. Cashier's checks or money orders must be made payable to MSA.
 - 4.2.1.2.2. Full particulars of the grounds on which the protest is lodged.
- 4.3. Ignorance
 - 4.3.1. A plea of ignorance to the rules and policies of the USYS Mississippi State Cup, USYS National Championships and/or the USYS National Presidents Cup is not sufficient grounds for protests or appeals.
- 4.4. Judgment
 - 4.4.1. Judgment decisions of the referee are not subject to protest or appeal.
- 4.5. Timing
 - 4.5.1. Notification of protest must be received by the TC within two (2) hours of completion of the game being protested.
- 4.6. Procedures
 - 4.6.1. The TC shall, immediately upon the receipt of a protest, notify the team against which the protest is made and shall give 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. A written response must be made within two (2) hours of notification.
 - 4.6.2. The TC shall compile the necessary information to hear the protest from all available sources before the protest is heard. This shall include, but not be limited to, coaches, field marshals, referees, assessors, witnesses if necessary, etc. All materials will be treated with confidentiality.
 - 4.6.3. After compiling the necessary information, the TC will meet to conduct the protest hearing. The decisions of the TC shall be binding on all parties.
 - 4.6.4. The TC will notify the parties of the TC's decision.

5. APPEALS

- 5.1. The decisions of the TC may be appealed to the Tournament Appeals Committee (TAC). The appellant shall bear the burden of showing that the decision being appealed is clearly erroneous. No new evidence may be presented to the TAC unless circumstances have materially changed, or new facts are discovered that were unavailable at the time of the original hearing.
 - 5.1.1. An appeal must be filed in writing to the TAC within two (2) hours of notification of the TC'S decision and include:
 - 5.1.1.1. A fee in the amount of \$300. This fee may be in cash, cashier's check or money order. Personal checks will not be accepted. Cashier's checks and money orders must be payable to MSA.
 - 5.1.2. Ignorance
 - 5.1.2.1. A plea of ignorance to the rules of the competition is not sufficient grounds for appeals or protests.
 - 5.1.3. Judgment
 - 5.1.3.1. Judgment decisions of the referees are not subject to appeal or protest.

6. USYS Protests and Appeals

6.1 Protests and appeals are formal procedures used to address violations of policies, rules, or procedures related to specific matches or decisions.

6.2 A Protest is a written objection to a match result, filed by a Team Official, Club Director, Director of Coaching of the team involved. Only the teams involved in the match may file a protest, and protests must be based on violations of published USYS rules, national policies, or IFAB Laws of the Game. Referee decisions on matters of fact and judgment are final and cannot be protested.

6.3 An Appeal is a request to transfer a decision from one jurisdiction to another for re-examination, filed by the original involved parties impacted by the decision. Only the Club Director or Director of Coaching can file an appeal.

6.4 Lodging a Protest:

- Must be orally lodged with the match referee and opposing coach before leaving the field.
- Noted on the match card.
- Orally lodged with the Competition Management Group within two hours of match completion, with written follow-up and a \$500 (cash, certified check, or epayment) filing fee within three hours.

6.5 Lodging an Appeal:

- Must be filed in writing within one hour of the decision being communicated.
- The written appeal must be submitted within three hours, following formal procedures.

6.6 Filing Procedures:

- Must include details, violated policies, desired resolution, relevant documents, and a \$500 fee (cash, certified check, or e-payment).
- The Competition Management Group reviews the submission, and their decision is final. If upheld, the fee is refunded; otherwise, it is non-refundable.

*Matters Not Provided For

- Any matters not expressly addressed in these rules shall be determined at the sole discretion of the Tournament Committee (TC), the MSA Council, the Director of Events, and/or the Executive Director. Their decisions shall be final and binding.