



**POLICY  
ON  
US YOUTH SOCCER  
NEBRASKA JUNIOR CUP**

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## PART 1—GENERAL

### 1.1. DEFINITIONS

Except as otherwise provided, the following definitions apply to this policy:

- a. **“Board of Directors”** means the Board of Directors of Nebraska State Soccer Association
- b. **“Club”** means an organization providing soccer to youth players that is a member of Nebraska State Soccer; provided however, a “club” need not have the word “club” as part of its official name.
- c. **“Club Pass”** means a US Youth Soccer pass which –
  - i. issued to a registered youth player by a club in compliance with the rules of Nebraska State Soccer.
- d. **“Federation”** means the United States Soccer Federation, Inc.
- e. **“game roster”** means the list of players who will participate in a particular competition.
- f. **“Nebraska State Soccer”** means the Nebraska State Soccer Association.
- g. **“rostering”** means assignment of a registered player to a team.
- h. **“seasonal year”** means days of play which are August 1 to July 31 of any given year.
- i. **“State Association”** means the administrative body within a territory determined by the US Youth Soccer’s National Council to carry out US Youth Soccer’s programs for youth players.
- j. **“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or indirectly) in soccer, and the suspension is for the entire term of the suspension with all rights and privileges withdrawn unless specifically stated otherwise by the suspending authority.
- k. **“team”** means a group of soccer players playing on the same side in soccer games.
- l. **“team Roster or Junior Cup roster”** means a list of registered players eligible to play for a team within this competition.
- m. **“US Youth Soccer”** means the United States Youth Soccer Association, Inc.
- n. **“youth player”** means an individual who has not reached 19 years of age prior to August 1 immediately before the start of any seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during a seasonal year is allowed to complete that seasonal year. A player who reaches 19 years of age during August of one seasonal year shall be allowed to complete all of the next seasonal year.

## **1.2. ESTABLISHMENT**

**1.2.1.** Nebraska State Soccer establishes and shall organize annually Nebraska Junior Cup competitions This policy applies to those competitions.

**1.2.2.** There shall be individual, separately conducted Nebraska Junior Cup competitions for boys and girls in each of the age groups.

**1.2.3.** Nebraska Junior Cup is an open competition for teams registered in the 11U – 12U age groups.

## **1.3. TITLES**

The title of the Nebraska Junior Cup competitions for each of the age groups shall be “NEBRASKA JUNIOR CUP”.

## **1.4. ADMINISTRATION**

**1.4.1.** The Nebraska Junior Cup competitions shall be managed by a Tournament Director appointed by Nebraska State Soccer. The Tournament Director will administer the tournament under the oversight of Nebraska Events Committee

**1.4.2.** There shall be a Nebraska Events Committee appointed as provided by the Nebraska State Soccer bylaws. The Committee is responsible for the entire administration of the Junior Cup competitions subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

**1.4.3.** The Nebraska Events Committee, the State Office Staff and the Tournament Director will work together to determine the site for the competition.

## **1.5. PRECEDENCE OF GAMES**

Nebraska Junior Cup competitions games shall take precedence over all other youth games.

## **1.6. NOTICES**

All notices and other communications required to be given under this policy shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the Board of Directors or a committee designated by it.

## **PART 2—TEAMS AND PLAYERS**

### **2.1. TEAM APPLICATIONS**

#### **2.1.1. Fees and Deadlines -**

- a. The Board of Directors shall determine each year the entry fee and date range for the competition.
- b. The Tournament Director will set the deadlines for team entry. Not later than the final deadline for entry established by the Tournament Director, each team wishing to enter the competition shall submit to the state office:
  - i. An on-line entry form indicating the team's intention to compete.
  - ii. A non-refundable fee in the amount set by the Board of Directors for the competition.
- c. Any team wishing to enter the competition after the deadline, but no later than one week after the final deadline, may be accepted at the discretion of the Tournament Director if adding the team does not create the need for a play in game. If the team is accepted, a late application fee, as set by the Board of Directors, may be applied.
- d. Teams will not be permitted to play any game of the Nebraska Junior Cup competition without the team entry and/or Junior Cup related fines being paid in full.

**2.1.2.** Teams may only enter Junior Cup in the age group of their oldest player or one age group up, based on their roster at the time of entry. After entry, teams may not release players in order to qualify for a younger age group.

**2.1.3.** All teams submitting an application agree to be available at all times on scheduled game dates, including dates published for Qualifying Games as needed.

**2.1.4.** Any team or club who withdraws from the competition after the application deadline and prior to the competition start will be subject to a fine:

- a. Withdrawal after schedules are posted surrenders the non-refundable entry fee
- b. Withdrawal with less than one week prior to the posted event start date requires the non-refundable entry fee and an additional \$200.
- c. Withdrawal fines may be appealed on the basis of reasons beyond the team's control. Appeals must be done in writing when notice of the withdrawal is given with full explanation of reasons for withdrawal.

**2.1.5.** Refunds - Should all or a portion of the Nebraska Junior Cup be canceled due to just cause or teams do not play three games, then refunds shall be issued as follows:

- a. One game played – Refund at least 45%
- b. Two games played – Refund at least 25%
- c. Games shall be considered played when completed in regulation time, shortened time or penalty kicks

## 2.2. TEAM ELIGIBILITY

**2.2.1.** The Nebraska Junior Cup competitions shall be open to any team whose players are registered with US Youth Soccer through Nebraska State Soccer if the team is in compliance with all of the following requirements:

- a. The team must be comprised of properly registered and rostered youth players (as defined by US Youth Soccer).
- b. The team must be in good standing with Nebraska State Soccer and must be in compliance with, and has not violated, any of the bylaws and policies of Nebraska State Soccer or US Youth Soccer.
- c. Team must be properly registered with Nebraska State Soccer or one of its approved leagues.
- d. A Team must demonstrate a continuity of rosters between the league between the approved state roster and the Junior Cup roster of at least 50%

## 2.3. ROSTERS

**2.3.1.** Every team participating in the Nebraska Junior Cup shall have a Team Roster based on this policy and will present a Game Roster for every match or competition.

**Team Roster** – A Team Roster shall have a minimum of 7 registered players on its roster at all times. The Team Roster may have up to 18 youth players on the roster.

**Game Roster** – The game roster shall be presented to the referee at the game check-in. 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 roster.

### 2.3.2. Roster Freeze

- a. A roster freeze date will be set no more than 2 weeks prior to the first Junior Cup bracket game. This date will be announced and posted by the Tournament Director prior to the entry deadline.
- b. After the roster freeze date all changes to the roster shall be limited in number and meet the following requirements:
  - i. Request for the change sent to the Tournament Director no less than 24 hours prior to the teams first Junior Cup match
  - ii. Request shall include the reasoning for the change and include all required check-in documents for added players
  - iii. No transfers of previously rostered players shall be permitted
- c. In the event of an emergency beyond the teams or coach's control, the team may appeal to the Tournament Director to make additional changes.

### 2.3.3. Rostered, Release and Transfer

- a. 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 Nebraska Junior Cup competition submits its Team Roster

- b. Only at the Nebraska Junior Cup–
  - i. a team may roster any player not having a club pass of that team’s club if a transfer stating the reason why this action has been requested, has been made and approved by Nebraska State Soccer on the designated form: and
  - ii. at the time a team’s roster for the Nebraska Junior Cup level is determined under this rule, the team may not roster more than 5 rostered youth who were previously rostered during the current seasonal year with a club other than the club of which the team is a member, the rostering of such youth players with such club shall be made in compliance with the rules and policies of Nebraska State Soccer
- c. In addition to the application of the club pass provisions of the policy a team participating in the competition may release involuntarily a player from its roster if the player has **violated bylaws, policies, or requirements of the Federation, US**
- d. A team may have on its roster only players of the following age groups for the seasonal year in which a team is participating:
  - i. For teams competing at the 11 and Under or 12 and Under:
    - a. of the age of the age group competition in which the team is participating for 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 for that seasonal year.

**2.3.4.** A team shall forfeit each game of the team in which –

- a. An unregistered player was with the team at the game in a uniform; or
- b. A player was improperly entered on the team’s roster; or
- c. The team no longer has a recognized team official on the team bench.

**2.3.5.** It shall be the responsibility of the State Office and the State Registrar to certify the eligibility of competing teams and to provide the policy online for the teams to review.

**2.3.6.** Team Check-in will be allowed by online check-in. Teams will be considered checked in once the following documents have been approved:

1. Junior Cup Roster
2. Proof of Age documents for all players (reference NSS policies III, D)
3. USYS Passes for Players and Coaches
4. Medical Releases for every player

## **2.4. FORFEITS FOR FAILURE TO COMPETE**

**2.4.1.** Any team intending to forfeit must give notice of its intention to forfeit to the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee and must give the notice twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled game. The notice shall include the reason for the forfeit.

**2.4.2.** Forfeits and failure to compete by a team shall be a matter of review by the Board of Directors that shall have the authority to take action against the team or club that the Board considers appropriate.

**2.4.3.** Any team or club who forfeits any game in the Junior Cup competition may be fined up to \$250 per game.

**2.4.4.** A minimum of five players constitutes a team. A ten (10) minute grace period shall be extended beyond the scheduled kick off time if five players are not available at the scheduled kick off time. A team of five players must start the game as soon as five players are at the field after the originally scheduled kick off time. If at the end of the ten (10) minute grace period the team does not have five players, the referee shall suspend the game and report the failure of the team to appear to the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee. The Committee reserves the right to declare a forfeit.

**2.4.5.** Any team that forfeits a game will not be allowed to advance out of their group to the semi-finals or championship game. In the event of a forfeit, the games that the forfeiting team played in will not be counted in the points for any of the teams they play. Teams in their bracket will only count the points from the games against the other teams in their bracket or crossed over against.

## **2.5. FORFEITS GENERALLY**

At the discretion of the Board of Directors or its designee, any team proven guilty of violating this policy or of any other requirement of Nebraska State Soccer shall be subject to sanctions including, up to forfeiture of all games and the preceding competition and fines and suspensions.

## **2.6. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

**2.6.1.** A player must be properly registered and rostered in accordance with the rules of US Youth Soccer and Nebraska State Soccer.

**2.6.2.** A player may be rostered to only one team Roster within the Junior Cup competition

**2.6.3.** A player who has been suspended may play after the player's term of suspension has expired.

**2.6.4.** Alcohol and Illegal Drugs - Players in Junior Cup Competition are prohibited from



consuming alcohol or using illegal drugs. Players are also prohibited from using any form of tobacco at the playing site of Junior Cup Competition. Penalty for violation by player participants is disqualification from the Junior Cup competition.

## **2.7. DISCIPLINE**

### **2.7.1 Ejections and Send-offs**

- a. Players ejected or team officials sent-off from a match shall be automatically suspended for the next Nebraska Junior Cup match. No substitution shall be permitted for a player who has been ejected from a match. The Nebraska Junior Cup committee will review all such dismissals and may impose additional penalties, suspensions or other punishment depending on the circumstances and severity of the infraction
- b. Players ejected from a match may continue to sit in the technical area unless removed by the referee for inappropriate behavior after they have been ejected.
- c. Players who are serving a disciplinary suspension may sit on the team bench while dressed in street clothes and will be held responsible for their actions the same as any other participant. If additional disciplinary situations occur in which a suspended player is involved, the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee will impose additional penalties, suspensions or other punishment to be served.
- d. Any team official sent-off from a match must leave the vicinity of the field before the match will be restarted. The team official may not have any contact with the team until the referees have left the field after the match.
- e. Team officials serving a disciplinary suspension may not attend matches. A dismissed team official that is rostered to more than one team in the competition will serve the suspension at the next scheduled match for the team with which the send-off occurred.
- f. A player who is ejected, or a coach who is sent-off, from their teams' final Nebraska Junior Cup game for that seasonal year is at least prohibited from participating in the next NSS sanctioned game for which the player is rostered including a game in the following season if necessary.

**2.7.2.** It is the responsibility of the Tournament Director 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.

**2.7.3.** Any team found guilty of using an ineligible player is not eligible to compete further in the Nebraska Junior Cup competition 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 Nebraska Junior Cup competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year. A player found guilty of submitting falsified birth information is prohibited from competing further in Nebraska Junior Cup competitions in the current and subsequent seasonal year.

**2.7.4.** Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in this policy, including cautions, ejections, and standard suspension. Suspension lengths will be communicated to the coach by the Tournament Director following the game.

**2.7.5.** 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 Nebraska State 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. Nebraska Junior Cup, Nebraska State Soccer and the Tournament Director have the authority and responsibility to remove any person(s) from the tournament for abusive or unsportsmanlike behavior.

## **2.8. PROTESTS AND APPEALS**

**2.8.1.** All questions relating to the qualifications of competitors, to interpretation of the rules, or any dispute or protest concerning the Nebraska Junior Cup competition, shall be referred to the Nebraska Event Committee regarding games in this competition.

### **2.8.2. Eligible and Type –**

- a. To be valid and eligible for consideration, each protest —
  - i. Must be orally lodged 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
  - ii. Must be filed with the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee within 2 hours after the completion of the game being protested, accompanied by —
    - a. A fee of \$100.00;
    - b. Written description of the protest, which must include full particulars of the grounds on which the protest is lodged; and
    - c. 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. Any protest relating to a judgment call of a referee or assistant referee will not be considered.
- d. The Chairperson of the committee with which the protest is properly lodged shall immediately on 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.

### **2.8.3. Appeal –**

- a. An appeal of a decision regarding a protest may be appealed as provided by US Youth Soccer Bylaw 703. Any such appeal must be filed within 2 hours of receiving the decision of the Nebraska Event Committee, with the Chairperson of that Committee

- b. Each appeal filed under subsection (a) of this section must be accompanied by –
  - i. a fee in an amount determined by the Nebraska State Soccer Board of Directors; and
  - ii. 5 written copies of the appeal.

**2.8.4.** 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.

**2.8.5.** A plea of ignorance to the rules and regulations of the Nebraska Junior Cup competition is not sufficient grounds for a protest or appeal. Violators may expect appropriate action by Nebraska State Soccer.

**2.8.6.** Decisions made on protests and appeals by the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee are binding and allow that competition to proceed.

### **Part 3 - Game Play**

#### **3.1. PASSES AND GAME ROSTERS**

**3.1.1.** At the Nebraska Junior Cup competition, each player and team official listed on a Team Roster must carry the US Youth Soccer member pass. The member pass issued to a player shall be a club pass identifying the club by name. The US Youth Soccer member pass must carry a current photograph of the player or team official.

#### **3.1.2. Game Check-in –**

- a. The US Youth Soccer member passes must be checked prior to each game. The Team Roster must be available at all games sites at all times.
- b. Each player shall have a number on the player’s jersey. The number shall be permanently 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. Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from other players and game officials.

#### **3.2. PLAYING RULES**

**3.2.1.** The playing rules of the Nebraska Junior Cup competition shall conform to the FIFA “Laws of the Game” except as provided by this rule.

**3.2.2.** The home team will be responsible for wearing an alternate color jersey, if necessary, as determined by the referee. Generally, the home team shall wear a light jersey and the

away team shall wear a dark jersey. The team listed first in all rounds shall be the home team. Teams use the side of the field with team benches (when available) and spectators shall use the opposite side of the field.

**3.2.3. Seeding Procedures –**

- a. All seeds will be determined by a double blind draw. In an age group where previous years Champions and finalists are entered, they will be automatically seeded 1 and 2 respectively.
- b. Once seeding order is determined, brackets will be created using a snake order.
- c. If a team is added, or withdrawn from the event after the seeding blind draw, a redraw will take place to determine the new brackets

**3.2.4. Bracketing -**

- a. 1-Team Bracket: Team is declared the winner.
- b. 2-Team Bracket: The two teams will play in the Championship match.
- c. 3-Team Bracket: Each team will play round robin games with each of the other teams in the bracket. The two high point teams will advance to the championship game. High point team will be the home team for the Championship.
- d. 4-Team Bracket: (one four-team bracket): Bracket play is round robin games with each of the other teams in the bracket. The two high point teams advance to the Championship match. The championship game will be a re-match and a semifinal or consolation game will not be played. High point team will be the home team for the Championship.
- e. 5-Team Brackets: Round robin games with each of the other teams in the bracket. The two high point teams advance to the Championship match.
- f. 6-Team Brackets (two three-team brackets): Bracket play is round robin games with each of the other teams in the bracket and a crossover game with a team from the other bracket. The semifinal will match high point teams in each bracket versus second high team in other bracket. The format may result in matches that are a re-match in the semifinal or Championship. No consolation game will be played. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> high point teams will be the home teams for the semifinals. High point team will be the home team for the Championship.
- g. 7-Team Brackets: All teams will play 4 games. Teams will not play all teams in the bracket. Top 2 teams will compete in the Championship game.
- h. 8-Team Brackets (two four-team brackets): Bracket play is round robin games with each of the other teams in the bracket. The semifinal will match high point teams in each bracket versus second high team in other bracket. The Format may result in matches that are a re-match in the Championship. No consolation game will be played. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> high point teams will be the home teams for the semifinals. High point team will be the home team for the Championship.

**3.2.5. Game Length and Overtime –**

- 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:

Length of halves: 30 minute halves

Ball size: 4

Format: 9v9

Overtime: Two 5 Minute halves

Tie games at the end of regulation playing time will stand except for each semi or final game in each age group.

- b. If a game is tied at the end of regulation play and overtime periods are to be played to determine a winner, two 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 two overtime periods, FIFA "Kicks from the Penalty Mark" rules will apply in order to determine the winner.

### **3.2.6. Substitutions –**

- a. Unlimited substitutions shall be allowed
- b. Substitution may occur on any stoppage of play with the approval of the referee.
- c. 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 substitute. A Team may only make a temporary substitution if they have a substitution available.

**3.2.7.** At the Nebraska Junior Cup competition unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed if neither team is at fault nor 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 Nebraska Junior Cup Committee may deem the game complete. However, if play is stopped at any time due to one of the teams being adjudged to be at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the Nebraska Event Committee whether the game is to be replayed or declared a forfeit.

**3.2.8. Irrelevant Matches:** In the event that weather or unforeseen circumstances prohibit a match from being played, and the outcome of the match does not impact a bracket's scoring or a quarter/semi/final seeding, it may be determined by the Nebraska Event committee and/or Tournament Director that the match will not be played.

**3.2.9. Ball -** All teams shall play each game with a ball that will be provided by Nebraska State Soccer.

**3.2.10.** Scoring Method and Bracket Winners - Bracket winners will be determined by the following point system: Maximum points per game are 3 (three).

Win ----- 3 (three) points  
Tie ----- 1 (one) point  
Loss ----- 0 (zero) points

**3.2.11.** Tiebreakers - If at the conclusion of bracket play, two or more teams have the same point total, advancement to the semi-finals or championship will be determined using the following tiebreakers in the order listed until a team is eliminated. Once a team is eliminated, advancement among the remaining teams shall again be determined by the tiebreakers in the order listed starting with head to head competition.

Winner of Head to Head (this criteria not used if more than two teams tied).

Winner of Most Games in your bracket.

Goal Spread with a maximum of four goals per game.

Example: Game score of 7-1 would be scored as 5-1 for Goal Spread

Fewest goals allowed.

Kicks from the penalty mark.

Note: If Kicks from the Penalty Mark are to be taken by three (3) teams, there will be a draw by the Junior Cup Committee. The first team drawn will receive the bye. The next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of penalty kicks. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in Kicks from the Penalty Mark to determine the winner. The bye team in the second contest of penalty kicks will be the home team. This process is only used when three (3) teams remain tied after going through the Tie Breakers

**3.2.12.** In a tie-breaker situation where both teams have earned a spot in the next round and a tie-breaker is needed only for seeding in the next round, seeding may be decided by a coin flip.

### **3.3. GAME OFFICIALS**

**3.3.1.** For Nebraska Junior Cup competition, the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee shall contract with a State Game Assignor.

**3.3.2.** Game Assignment -

- a. Any referee appointed to officiate in any Nebraska Junior Cup competition game may not be a past or present member of either of the competing teams.
- b. Any player or coach that is participating in the Nebraska Junior Cup will not be allowed to referee during the Junior Cup.
- c. Assignors and referees must recognize that when officiating, familiarity or family relationships must be avoided. Also Assignors should limit the number of games a referee officiates for any team or club.

**3.3.3.** The Nebraska Junior Cup will use the current Pay Scale approved by the Board of Directors.

**3.3.4.** 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.”

**3.3.5.** In the event the referee appointed fails to appear the Referee Assignor will determine who will replace the referee. The same procedure will apply in the event of a referee becoming ill during the process of a game. In both cases, if the Referee Assignor has no one to replace the referee the crew will use a club lineperson that will be recruited by the Referee Assignor.

**3.3.6.** 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 and US Youth Soccer Pass to the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee or its designee immediately after the game.

**3.3.7.** The referee must forward to the Nebraska Junior Cup Committee or its designee on the official game card, the results of the game and all issues related to the game.

## **PART 4 - MODIFICATION OF POLICY**

### **4.1. MODIFICATION OF POLICY**

The Tournament Director and Events Committee, shall determine any matter not provided for in the Nebraska Junior Cup policies and has the authority to modify any rules, protocols or guidelines as deemed necessary in order to ensure the safe and orderly progression, or betterment of the competition. Any such decision of the committee is final and not subject to appeal.

Established 2024