SOUTHWESTERN YOUTH ASSOCIATION (SYA)
FALL 2026 END-OF-SEASON (EOS) RECREATIONAL SOCCER TOURNAMENT
RULES OF COMPETITION (U9-U12)
NOVEMBER 7-8, 2026

1. Age and Eligibility

a. Only SYA recreational soccer league players may participate in the EOS tournament. No travel players, guest players, or players from any other team are eligible.
b. All regular season suspensions or sit-outs for any player, coach, team official, or spectator carry forward into the tournament and must be served before that individual can participate in the tournament. All exceptions must be approved by the appropriate SYA Soccer authority before the game.
c. Except for documented suspensions and sit-outs, referees do not enforce eligibility or participation rules. If a coach questions a player's eligibility, the game shall be played in its entirety and the head coach will inform the appropriate SYA Soccer Age Group Coordinator immediately after the game.
d. If an ineligible player or coach participates in a game, or a suspended individual is present at the field, SYA Soccer will decide whether to award a forfeit to the opposing team.

2. Laws of the Game

a. All games are single-elimination, played in accordance with the IFAB 2026/27 Laws of the Game as modified by SYA Age Group Rules and the EOS tournament rules described in this document.
b. Goal differential rules and goalkeeper playing time restrictions do not apply for the tournament.
c. All eligible players must play at least 50% of each tournament game. Coaches are responsible for complying with playing time requirements. NO player can play the entire game unless all players on the team have played 75% of the game.
d. All games will be played with a running clock with no time added to either half. The referee is the official timekeeper and all decisions regarding game duration are solely at the referee's discretion.
e. Every game must have a winner. Any game that is tied at the end of regulation time will use penalties (penalty shoot-out) to determine a winner (Law 10.3). There are no overtime periods for any game.
f. Any eligible player may participate in a penalty shoot-out. Eligible players do not have to be on the field at the end of regulation time. Players, coaches or team officials who have been sent off (shown a red card) are not allowed to participate in a penalty shoot-out. Coaches and non-kicking players may stay with their teams (near the center circle) during a shoot-out at the referee's discretion.
g. Referees, after consulting with both team's coaches, may shorten any game due to darkness, delayed start times, weather, or other factors.
h. Any game that is terminated due to weather, darkness, unsafe or non-playable field, or other factors will be considered played and the score official at the time of termination. SYA Soccer has the authority to determine the outcome of a terminated game.

<table>
<tr><th>KEY RULE MODIFICATIONS</th><th>U9</th><th>U10</th><th>U11-U12</th></tr>
<tr><td>Number of Players</td><td>6 v 6
(minimum of 4 players to start or continue game)</td><td>8 v 8
(minimum of 5 players to start or continue game)</td><td>9 v 9
(minimum of 6 players to start or continue game)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Game Duration</td><td>50 minutes
(2 x 25-minute halves)</td><td>50 minutes
(2 x 25-minute halves)</td><td>60 minutes
(2 x 30-minute halves)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hydration Breaks</td><td colspan="3">If authorized, no more than 3 minutes per break.
The clock shall remain running during a break and no time added to either half.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Substitutions</td><td colspan="3">Unlimited at any stoppage in play at the referee’s discretion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Determining the Outcome of a Match</td><td colspan="3">– Goal differential rules do not apply for the tournament
– All games must have a winner. No overtime. If tied at the end of regulation time use a penalty shoot-out to determine a winner (Law 10.3)
– Any eligible player may participate in a penalty shoot-out (not just players on the field at the end of regulation time)
– Players, coaches or team officials sent off during a game (shown a red card) are not eligible to participate in a penalty shoot-out</td></tr>
<tr><td>Heading the Ball</td><td colspan="3">– No heading the ball for U9-U12. Play must be stopped whenever the ball contacts a player’s head, face, or neck
– If heading is unintentional, restart is a dropped ball to the team that last touched the ball prior to head contact. If contact occurred in the penalty area, restart is a dropped ball to the goalkeeper regardless of which team last touched the ball
– If heading is intentional, restart is an indirect free kick to team that did not head the ball</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sliding or Slide Tackling</td><td colspan="2">– No sliding or slide tackling for U9-U10 field players
– Exception: U9-U10 goalkeepers may slide in their own penalty area to make a save or prevent a ball from leaving the field if the action does not endanger any player</td><td>Sliding and slide tackling are allowed for U11-U12</td></tr>
<tr><td>Goalkeeper Restrictions</td><td colspan="2">– No goalkeeper playing time restrictions for U9-U10
– No goalkeeper punts or drop kicks for U9-U10
– Goalkeeper must kick, roll or throw the ball into play</td><td>No goalkeeper restrictions for U11-U12</td></tr>
<tr><td>Build Out Lines and Offside</td><td>– For U9, the halfway line is the build out line
– Opposing players must retreat behind the halfway line on goal kicks and when goalkeeper has possession of the ball
– Offside is judged between the halfway line and goal line</td><td>– For U10, build out lines are equidistant from the halfway line and the top of each penalty area
– Opposing players must retreat behind build out line on goal kicks and when goalkeeper has possession of the ball
– Offside only judged between the build out line and goal line</td><td>No build out lines for U11-U12</td></tr>
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3. Fields and Equipment

a. Coaches will ensure fields are properly set up before the game (goals, nets, corner flags, etc.). Referees will inspect the field and goals for safety. Any delays due to a field not being ready by kickoff will be deducted from the game duration. Referees will reduce each half to play two equal length halves.
b. If the field and goals are safe, the game will be played even if there are no corner flags or improper field markings (no build out lines, incorrect goal area or penalty area sizes, etc.).
c. Players and coaches will occupy one side of the field and spectators will take the other side. Only coaches and team officials are permitted to be in their respective team areas (no spectators or non-team officials). Referees may require spectators or non-team officials to move to the spectator areas.
d. No one should be behind either goal line without the referee's consent. This is to ensure players are not adversely affected by individuals behind the goals. At some fields this may be unavoidable so referees may adjust this guidance based on weather, heat or sun, field conditions, safety, or other considerations.
e. Unless otherwise specified by the competition authority (SYA Soccer), the home team is listed first in the tournament schedule and will wear red. Uniform numbers are not required.
f. The home team will provide an appropriate number of game balls to the match officials.
g. Any time thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the referee shall immediately suspend the game and direct all people to leave the field and proceed with haste to the nearest shelter. There are no exceptions to this policy. All people should remain in a sheltered location for thirty (30) minutes after the last incidence of thunder or lightning before resuming a game. SYA Soccer will determine the winner of any game that cannot be resumed if its completion interferes will the next game on that field.

4. Failure to Show

a. A 5-minute grace period after the scheduled kickoff time is provided for each team to have the minimum number of players ready to play. Within the grace period, any start time delay will be deducted from the total game duration. Referees will reduce each half to play two equal length halves.
b. If one or both teams cannot field a team within the grace period, the game shall not be played and the outcome (winner) shall be decided by SYA Soccer. Referees will not declare forfeits nor will they officiate any tournament game as a "friendly" match.

5. Game Reports

a. Home and away team coaches are jointly responsible for reporting scores, as well as any red cards/send offs and/or dismissals, to the applicable SYA Soccer Age Group Coordinator immediately after the game.
b. Referees must report all red cards/send offs, spectator dismissals, or irresponsible behavior by any participant immediately after the game to:
   - SYA Referee Assignor: soccerrefphil@gmail.com
   - SYA Referee Commissioner: refcommissioner@syasoccer.org, (571) 926-4448 (text preferred)

6. Match Officials

a. US Soccer-certified match officials will be assigned to all tournament games.
b. Two-person system of control will not be used for any tournament games.
c. Club linesmen will not be used unless there are fewer than three (3) match officials present for a game and only if requested by the referee. The use of club linesmen must be agreed to by both teams' coaches. Club linesmen duties are defined solely by the referee.
d. All referee decisions are final. There will be no protests. Coaches or team officials can be sanctioned in accordance with the Laws of the Game and SYA Soccer policies.