



2026 Tournament Rules

Whitpain Champions Cup

1. General Rules/Policy

The Tournament Committee's interpretation of these rules shall be final and binding. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to decide on all matters pertaining to the tournament. Failure to abide or follow rules may result in team/club sanctioning, carding, or fining.

- Zero tolerance for abusive or disruptive behavior directed toward officials, staff, or other teams.
- Pets are prohibited unless they are service animals.
- No onsite cooking, grills are not allowed unless a permit has been secured by the host facility.
- No alcoholic beverages permitted.
- No outside vending allowed.
- Please place trash in appropriate receptacles. Do not leave behind on field or turf.
- Do not leave behind broken chairs, tents, tables, etc. This is a volunteer run tournament, your help is appreciated.
- No spectators allowed inside the fence of turf fields. Athletes, coaches and officials only.
- No gum, candy, food, or sports drinks on artificial turfs.
- Please do not set up tents in front of club house windows.
- Parking in designated areas only. Failure to follow parking instructions from signage, event or facility staff, blocking access areas will result in your vehicle being towed at your expense.
- Please lock and secure your vehicles, Whitpain Recreation Association, and Whitpain Township and its assignees are not responsible for theft or damage.
- First and second place awards will be presented.

2. Laws of the Game

All games will be played in accordance with FIFA and USYSA laws, including prevailing governance by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA) except as specifically modified by this rules document.

Heading Policy

Heading the ball is prohibited in U11 games and younger. At age group divisions U11 and younger, whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. If deliberate, then the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.



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3. Eligibility and Registration

All participating teams must be currently registered with their State association. **Teams from states that require permission to travel forms must have them authorized by their State association if this tournament is an out of state tournament for your team.** An official roster must be submitted at check-in. The roster shall be submitted as part of registration during tournament check in. A second copy of the official roster shall be maintained by the team for official check during matches by referees.

If requested, the team representative must present a player identification card for each participating player (including guests) that has been approved by the teams State Association. Failure to present these cards for any player will deny that player the permission to play.

A maximum of five (5) guest players will be allowed during the tournament. All guest players are required to have the same information included on the roster as the 'original' team members.

No player may play for more than one team in the tournament for the duration of the event.

It is recommended that a team representative have a parent signed medical release form for each player that has been approved by the teams State Association.

All teams are responsible for their own insurance. In the case of injury during travel or while participating in the tournament, Whitpain Recreation Association, Whitpain Township or its assignees will not be liable.

4. Payment and Scheduling for the Tournament/ Showcase

Unless otherwise accommodated, all teams are required to pay no later than **10 days** before the commencement of the tournament. Failure to do so may result in your team's application being declined and not considered for scheduling.

The tournament committee will always aim to publish a preliminary schedule **on or around 7 days** before the commencement of the tournament/showcase.

Refunds. NO REFUNDS WILL BE ISSUED ONCE THE SCHEDULE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED. The following exceptions may apply:

- Inclement weather refunds may be provided less administrative costs, as stated below.
- Teams playing fewer than 3 games will be offered a pro-rated fee.



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5. Game Standards

Our Tournament is aligned with the game standards of US Soccer.

Age Group	Ball Size	Game Format	Game Duration	Roster Size (Max)
U09	4	7v7	2X20	12
U10	4	7v7	2x20	12
U11	4	9v9	2x20	16
U12	4	9v9	2x20	16
U13	5	11v11	2x25	18
U14	5	11v11	2x25	18

Water breaks may be implemented at the discretion of referees. The clock will continue to run during the water breaks.

6. Inclement Weather

In the case of severe inclement weather, the Tournament Committee shall have the authority to change the format as follows:

- Relocate or reschedule any game;
- Consider any game as complete once 50% of the game played;
- Cancel any preliminary games that have no bearing on the selection of division winners;
- Reduce the duration of any game as needed.

No refunds will be made for cancellation in part due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event of whole cancellation of the tournament, net partial refunds will be made after reasonable administrative expenses have been paid.

7. Substitutions

Substitutions may be made without limit, with the permission of the referee as follows: after a goal has been scored, at any goal kick, at any throw in, corner-kick, after an injury, for a yellow carded player.

There will be no substitutions for a player who has received a red card.



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8. Protests

There will be no protests allowed.

9. Games and Equipment

All uniforms must be numbered. The team listed as the home team should wear light color uniforms, the team listed as the away team should wear dark color uniforms. In the event of conflicting color jerseys, the home team will be required to change (home team is listed first on the schedule). Players are required to wear shin guards in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

Players wearing a hard cast must have it covered with protective covering. It will be up to the individual referee's discretion to make sure the cast is covered properly and will not pose a physical danger to any player. If a referee does not feel the cast is covered sufficiently, then that player will not be able to play.

No metal cleats may be worn during soccer games.

Players may not wear jewelry on the playing field, including metal hair clips.

Game ball will be provided by the tournament committee. The home team should have a suitable replacement.

Be at your field ready to play 20 minutes before game time. Warmups are not permitted on the field prior to kickoff.

Referee will toss coin with team captains to start the game and choose goal. The referee, at the direction of tournament staff or at his/her own discretion may forego the coin toss and allow visiting team to select possession or field orientation to keep games on time.

Both coaches must sign game reports. Failure to sign the game card will revoke your teams right to score protests.

Mercy Rule- If your team outscores another team by more than four (4) goals, the score reported online will not exceed a four (4) goal difference. This will not affect the tie breaker rules as the maximum goal difference for calculating a tie breaker is four (4) goals.

No player may be rostered or play on more than one team for the duration of the tournament.



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Conduct

Players, coaches and spectators are expected to conduct themselves within the spirit and laws of the game. Players, coaches or spectators ejected from a game by the referee will be required to leave the field area. Severe misconduct and/or failure to comply with a referee could result in disqualification from the remainder of the tournament. Coaches will be held accountable for their spectators and all team personnel behavior.

If a player is sent off (red card or two yellow) they will be suspended for at least the next game in the tournament. **A penalty of one point will be deducted from the offending team.**

Players and coaches shall occupy the opposite side of the field to spectators. No one will be permitted behind either end line.

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any game sites.

10. Failure to Show and Forfeits

There will be a 5-minute grace time allowed for teams not at the field of play at the scheduled time of kick-off. The opponent shall be awarded a 2-0 win for the match. A minimum of six (6) players is required for 9v9 and five (5) for 7v7 games.

In no event shall a team who forfeits a game be eligible for first place awards. The team with the next best record or point total shall be declared the award winner.

11. Determination of Division/Bracket Winners

Each win counts for three (3) points, each tie for one (1) point, losses are zero (0) and a bonus point (1) will be awarded for a shut-out (except 0-0). All games in the initial phase shall carry equal weight, both in-group games and cross-over games. At the end of play, the division champion will be the team with the most win/tie points. In the event of a tie within the division, the following criteria will be used to determine the division champion (and finalist), in the following order:

- a) *Head to Head Competition*- Head-to-head shall only be utilized in the event of a two-way tie and will no longer be utilized in the event of a tie among three or more teams.
- b) *Goal Differential* – up to plus-4 or minus-4 units awarded per game.
- c) *Accumulated Goals Against* – The team with the fewest goals allowed shall prevail.
- d) *Accumulated Goals Scored* – limit of 4 per game
- e) *Most wins*
- f) *Penalty shootout*- This is for groups of 6 only where the top 2 teams did not play the same two teams in their first 2 games.



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Penalty Shootout Rules

- All shootouts are the best of 5 and if the shootout is tied after five shooters then the shootout goes into sudden death.
- Only players that are on the field when the final whistle blows can participate in the shootout.
- Once the player begins their approach to the ball they must be moving forward at all times and are not allowed to stop before making contact with the ball.

Final/Consolation Game Winner Tie-Breaker. To determine the winner at the end of a final or a consolation match in the event of a tie:

- The game shall be decided with a Penalty Shootout. Penalty Shootout Rules stated above shall apply. Shootouts may have to occur during a different game break or a different field depending on the available time. This shall be at the direction of the tournament director.
- Alternatively, if requested, the tournament director may, if time permits, permit two 5 minute extra time periods with a golden goal. If the game is still tied then the Penalty Shootout shall apply.