

FORCE CLASSIC

RULES & REGULATIONS

AUGUST 28-30, 2026 • CRYSTAL LAKE, ILLINOIS

GOVERNING LAWS Games are governed by the IFAB Laws of the Game 2026/27, as adopted by FIFA, US Youth Soccer and Illinois Youth Soccer Association, except where modified by these tournament rules. Tournament rules control if a conflict exists.

1. REGISTRATION & ELIGIBILITY

- Teams that have not successfully submitted all required paperwork through Sinc Sports must check in onsite at Lippold Park Soccer House 45-60 minutes before their first match. Teams whose paperwork has been approved may proceed directly to the field.
- All non-IYSA registered teams must present a completed medical release form for each participant at registration; the tournament will retain the forms. IYSA registered teams are not required to present medical releases. If an injury occurs, the Tournament Host will retain and submit the required documentation to IYSA.
- All out-of-state teams must have any travel permission required by their state association.
- Guest-player limits are three per team for U7-U8 and five per team for U9-U19. Required US Youth Soccer guest-player documentation must be provided. Club-pass players are not considered guests and may be added to the tournament roster with a valid player pass.
- Tournament rosters may be changed until registration/check-in is completed. The roster is then frozen for the tournament unless the Tournament Director approves an exception in writing.
- AYSO or recreational teams must register with IYSA as a tournament team and obtain required passes before participating.
- Every rostered player must have a current player pass. An approved hard pass, mobile pass or color copy submitted with the team paperwork is acceptable.
- A player may not be registered with more than one team or move between teams during the tournament unless the Tournament Director gives prior written approval.

2. MATCH LENGTHS & ROSTER LIMITS

Age / Format	Match Length	Ball	Maximum Roster
U7-U8 (5v5)	2 x 20 minutes	Size 4	8
U9-U10 (7v7)	2 x 25 minutes	Size 4	14
U11-U12 (9v9)	2 x 30 minutes	Size 4	16
U13-U15 (11v11)	2 x 35 minutes	Size 5	22
U16-U19 (11v11)	2 x 40 minutes	Size 5	22

- Half-time is four minutes. The referee is not required to add time. Decisions by the referee or Tournament Staff concerning match time are final.
- A team may dress no more than the applicable maximum roster for a match.

3. GAME PROCEDURES

- Parents and spectators must remain on the side of the field opposite the teams.
- A maximum of three properly credentialed coaches may be in the team area. Each coach is responsible for the conduct of the team and its spectators. If a credentialed coach is unavailable at kick-off, Force FC may provide one for a fee charged to the team or club. The team has until the end of half-time to provide its own credentialed coach; otherwise, the match is forfeited. The appointed Force FC coach will remain through the second half so the players may complete the match.
- The home team wears light-colored jerseys and the away team wears dark-colored jerseys. If colors conflict, the home team must change.
- There is no coin toss. The home team uses the north/west bench, defends the north/west goal and takes the first-half kick-off. Teams switch ends at half-time.
- Offside is enforced in 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11 matches, subject to the U9-U10 build-out-line modification. Offside is not enforced in 5v5.
- If an official tournament ball is unavailable, the home team must provide a suitable game ball.
- Field and goal dimensions: U7-U8 play 5v5 on approximately 35 x 25 yards with 6 x 12-foot goals and goalkeepers; U9-U10 play 7v7 on fields approximately 60-70 x 40-50 yards with 6 x 18-foot goals; U11-U12 play 9v9 on fields approximately 80-95 x 50-60 yards with matching goals of 6 x 18, 7 x 21 or 8 x 24 feet; U13-U19 play 11v11 on full-size fields with 8 x 24-foot goals.
- Field Marshals may retain player passes after a match until the bench area has been cleaned.
- No unauthorized video review, goal-line technology, semi-automated offside technology or VAR will be used to make or change referee decisions.

4. SMALL-SIDED MODIFICATIONS

U7-U8 (5v5)

- No offside.
- At a goal kick, opponents are encouraged to retreat behind the halfway line, which serves as the build-out line, until the ball is put into play.

U9-U10 (7v7) build-out line

- When the goalkeeper controls the ball with the hands during play, or when a goal kick is awarded, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put into play.
- The goalkeeper may pass, throw or roll the ball into play. Punts and drop kicks are not allowed. Once the ball is put into play, opponents may cross the build-out line and play continues normally.
- A prohibited punt or drop kick results in an indirect free kick to the opponents from the location of the offence. If the offence occurs in the goal area, the kick is taken on the goal-area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point.
- The build-out line marks the point from which offside may be penalized. A player cannot be penalized for offside between the halfway line and the build-out line, but may be penalized between the build-out line and the goal line.

5. 2026/27 IFAB LAW UPDATES

- Substitution timing: except where safety, security or injury makes this impossible, a player being substituted must leave the field within 10 seconds of the referee's signal. If the player does not do so, the replacement may enter only with the referee's permission at the first stoppage after one minute of playing time has elapsed following the restart. This timing does not apply to on-the-fly substitutions.
- Injuries: unless an IFAB exception applies, a player who is assessed or treated on the field, or whose injury causes play to be stopped or a restart to be delayed, must leave the field and may return only with the referee's permission after one minute of playing time has elapsed following the restart. Goalkeeper injuries and injuries caused by an offence for which an opponent is cautioned or sent off are among the exceptions.

- Delayed restarts: when a team unfairly delays a throw-in or goal kick, the referee will whistle and begin a visible five-second countdown. If time expires, a delayed throw-in is awarded to the opponents and a delayed goal kick becomes a corner kick to the opponents.
- Penalty kicks and penalty shoot-outs: if the kicker accidentally kicks the ball with both feet simultaneously, or the ball immediately touches the non-kicking foot or leg, a goal is followed by a retake. If no goal is scored during a shoot-out, the kick is recorded as missed; during a match, play restarts with an indirect free kick to the defending team.
- A player who leaves the field in protest of a referee decision, or instructs or encourages teammates to do so, is sent off. A team official who instructs or encourages players to leave in protest is sent off. If a team is responsible for a match being abandoned because it has too few players, the match is forfeited.
- Any accessory or item of equipment must not be dangerous. A non-dangerous accessory may be worn if it is safely and securely covered. A dangerous item must be removed and may not simply be taped or covered. The referee has final authority over player equipment.

6. TOURNAMENT SCORING & TIE-BREAKERS

- Preliminary-round scoring: win - 3 points; draw - 1 point; loss - 0 points.
1. Head-to-head result
 2. Goal differential (maximum of four per match)
 3. Most goals scored (maximum of four per match)
 4. Fewest goals allowed
 5. Penalty shoot-out
- For a three-team tie, head-to-head applies only if all three tied teams have played one another. Otherwise, proceed to the next criterion until one team is separated. Restart the tie-breaker sequence with the remaining tied teams.
 - Tournament Staff may adjust semi-final pairings to avoid a repeat match-up before the final.

7. KNOCKOUT MATCHES

- There is no extra time in preliminary matches. A tied semi-final, third-place match or championship match is decided by two five-minute extra-time periods; there is no golden goal.
- If still tied, the teams take alternating penalty kicks in a best-of-five shoot-out. Only players eligible and on the field at the end of extra time may participate, subject to the IFAB requirement to equalize the number of eligible players. If still tied after five kicks per team, the shoot-out continues one kick per team until one team has scored and the other has not after the same number of kicks.

8. GROUP FORMATS & ADVANCEMENT

- Four-team division: each team plays three group matches; first and second in the standings advance to the championship match.
- Five-team division: each team plays two randomly selected group matches; first advances directly to the championship match; second and third play a semi-final for the other championship place; fourth and fifth play a consolation match as their third match.
- Six-team division - Round robin: two brackets of three. Each team plays the other teams in its bracket; A1 plays B2 and A2 plays B1 in semi-finals; the winners meet in the final; A3 plays B3 in a consolation match.
- Six-team division - One crossover: two brackets of three. Each team plays both teams in its bracket plus one crossover match; each bracket winner advances to the championship match.
- Six-team division - All crossover: two brackets of three. Each team plays all three teams in the other bracket; the top two teams in the overall division standings advance to the championship match, including two teams from the same bracket if applicable.

- One-crossover format will normally be used where Friday play is available; all-crossover format will normally be used where it is not. The Tournament Director determines the format.
- Eight-team division: two brackets of four. Each team plays three matches within its bracket; the winner of each bracket advances to the championship match.
- Every effort will be made to avoid repeat opponents unless it is a fourth match. If a team plays only three total matches and two are against the same opponent, a partial refund will be provided.

9. EQUIPMENT

- Players may not use equipment or wear anything dangerous. Prescription eyewear must be designed and secured for sports use; ordinary prescription glasses are not permitted.
- Casts and orthopedic devices may be used only when fully covered by foam and elastic bandage and approved by the referee. No metal may be exposed. Devices designed specifically for sport may be worn, subject to referee approval.
- Shin guards must be worn and must provide reasonable protection. Socks must cover the shin guards.
- Every player must have an individual jersey number; duplicate numbers are not permitted on the same team in a match.
- All equipment is subject to the referee's final approval.

10. FORFEITS & MINIMUM PLAYERS

- Minimum players to start or continue: four for 5v5, five for 7v7, six for 9v9 and seven for 11v11. A match begins on time if the minimum is present. A forfeit is declared if a team is not present and prepared to play within five minutes after the scheduled start.
- A forfeited match is recorded as a 3-0 win for the opponent, unless the non-forfeiting team earned a more favorable score before abandonment, in which case Tournament Staff may preserve that score.
- A team that forfeits a match is not eligible to advance to a semi-final or final.

11. SUBSTITUTIONS

- U7-U12 substitutions are unlimited and on the fly. Substitutions must not interfere with play, and the entering player may not enter before the replaced player has left.
- U13-U19 substitutions are unlimited and may be made with the referee's permission at: a goal kick (either team); after a goal (either team); half-time (either team); the start of extra time (either team); a throw-in (either team if the team taking the throw substitutes); after a yellow card (carded player only); or for an injury at the referee's discretion. If an injured player is replaced, the opponent may make one corresponding substitution.

12. PROTESTS

- Referee decisions concerning facts connected with play are final. Protests based on referee judgment will not be considered.
- Any otherwise eligible protest must be submitted in writing to the Tournament Committee within one hour after the match, with a \$100 fee. The fee is refunded only if the protest is upheld.

13. SEND-OFFS & DISCIPLINE

- A player sent off receives at least a one-match suspension. The Tournament Committee may impose a longer suspension and report misconduct to the appropriate state association.
- Throwing or attempting to throw a punch results in removal from the tournament and may be reported for further discipline.
- A coach or team official sent off receives at least a one-match suspension and may be subject to further action by the Tournament Committee or state association.
- A team may not replace a player who has been sent off during that match.

- Players, coaches and spectators may be removed or suspended for abusive, discriminatory, threatening or persistently irresponsible conduct.

14. WEATHER, CANCELLATION & TOURNAMENT AUTHORITY

- The Tournament Committee may reschedule, relocate, shorten, suspend, abandon or terminate matches because of weather, unsafe conditions or operational necessity. If at least one-half of a match has been played when it is terminated because of severe weather, the match may be declared complete and scored as it stood.
- A weather-interrupted match may be reduced by up to one-half of its scheduled duration.
- A match with no bearing on advancement may be cancelled.
- A third group match may be designated as the championship match if both teams have already secured places in the final and both head coaches approve.
- The Tournament Committee determines final standings and awards and may relocate a penalty shoot-out to avoid delaying other matches.
- The Tournament Director may interpret these rules and decide matters not expressly covered, consistent with the best interests and safety of participants. Any material rule change during the event will be communicated to affected teams.
- Neither the Tournament Committee nor Crystal Lake Soccer Federation/Force FC is responsible for expenses incurred because matches are interrupted or cancelled due to weather or adverse field conditions. No refund is due unless the tournament is cancelled. If cancelled, refunds will be prorated; if cancelled before play begins, a full refund will be issued, except that the tournament may retain up to 20% of the entry fee when cancellation results from an act of nature or other circumstances beyond its control.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Force Classic is dedicated to player development, safety and good sportsmanship. The Tournament Director may suspend, remove or restrict any player, coach or spectator whose behavior is inconsistent with those principles, subject to applicable governing-body requirements.