

US YOUTH SOCCER REGION III CHAMPIONSHIP

MANUAL

*This Manual is designed to document
the methods, procedures and guidelines
for the Region III Championship Tournament.*

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 PURPOSE

This Manual is designed to document the methods, procedures and guidelines for the Region III Championship Tournament.

1.2 REGION III CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT OBJECTIVE

The Southern Regional Championship Tournament is one of four Regional Tournaments whose objective is to determine Regional Champions. This championship is part of a nationwide tournament whose objective is to determine National Champions in 12 divisions, age's u14 through u19, boys and girls.

1.3 AGE GROUPS

As defined in the National Championship Rules, the age groups are U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18, and U-19 for boys and girls. These regional champions advance to the national championships.

1.4 PARTICIPATION

Each national state association may be represented by one team in each age group. States may have additional teams as either Premiere League representatives or Wildcards. All representative teams are determined by an open state level qualifying competition using a tournament format established by the state association and approved by the Region III Championship Committee. All teams must play in their respective state level qualifying competition. The rules covering team eligibility and player eligibility are set forth in the US Youth Soccer National Championship Rules.

1.5 MEMBERSHIP

Region III (Southern Region) is one of four administrative regions comprising the United States Youth Soccer Association. Region III consists of the following twelve member state associations:

- Alabama Youth Soccer Association
- Arkansas State Soccer Association
- Florida Youth Soccer Association
- Georgia Youth Soccer Association
- Louisiana Soccer Association
- Mississippi Youth Soccer Association
- North Carolina Youth Soccer Association
- North Texas State Soccer Association
- Oklahoma Soccer Association
- South Carolina Youth Soccer Association
- South Texas Youth Soccer Association
- Tennessee State Soccer Association

1.6 **AUTHORITY**

The Southern Regional Tournament is the property of US Youth Soccer Region III. Notwithstanding any language to the contrary, all decisions regarding the Regional Competition lie within the purview and authority of the Regional Director.

All tournament games played at the national, regional, state, or where applicable, lower levels are conducted under the authority of the United States Youth Soccer Association. All games are played and administered in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the US Youth Soccer National Championship Rules.

1.7 **AWARDS**

A. Region III provides the following awards for the regional tournament:

Trophies: Plaques for teams finishing 1st and 2nd

Medals: Twenty-two (22) medals for teams finishing 1st and 2nd
 Twenty-two (22) medals for each team finishing tied for 3rd

B. If supplied by US Youth Soccer a Fair Play Award will be presented. One team in each age group is given this award. Selection is based on points awarded during the preliminary rounds.

1.8 **FINAL AUTHORITY**

The final authority for all rule interpretations is with the Region III Championship Committee.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE

- A. **Composition:** The National Championship Committee (NCC) consists of a National Chairperson and four Regional Representatives as appointed by the Chairperson of U.S. Youth Soccer.
- B. **Responsibilities:** The NCC (1) organizes and administers the national finals subject to approval of the U.S. Youth Soccer Board of Directors, (2) recommends changes to the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championship Rules, and (3) adjudicates disputes concerning the application and administration of these rules at the national level.

2.2 THE REGION III TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

- A. **Composition:** The Region III Director appoints the members of the Region III Championship Committee. They are the Regional Tournament Chairperson (RTC), who represents the region on the NCC, and other such members as the Regional Director may appoint. Such members may include (1) one of the Deputy Regional Directors, (2) the Regional Secretary/Treasurer, (3) the Regional Rules Administrator, (4) the Regional Referee Administrator (RRA), and (5) the chairperson of the host organizing committee.
- B. **Responsibilities:** Under the direction of the RTC, the Region Championship Committee (1) organizes and administers the Southern Regional Championship Tournament in accordance with the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championship Rules and such other guidelines as may be set forth by Region III, (2) recommends changes to the regional rules and guidelines, (3) adjudicates disputes at the regional level concerning the application and administration of the national and regional rules and guidelines, and (4) assures that the tournament is run in a manner consistent with the high standards befitting this competition.

2.3 HOST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

- A. **Composition:** The appointment and membership of the Host Organizing Committee (HOC) falls within the jurisdiction of the host state association. However, the committee's leadership and relationship with both the state and local associations must be clearly specified from the outset.
- B. **Responsibilities:** The HOC provides all local facilities, organization, manpower, funding, and other support as required by and agreed upon by the region. Variations in these responsibilities and authorities will be agreed to in advance and specified in writing.

2.4 TOURNAMENT CONDUCT COMMITTEE

- A. **Composition:** The Conduct Committee is chaired by the RTC and consists of three members of the Regional Championship Committee.
- B. **Responsibilities:** The Conduct Committee reviews all game ejections and applies suspensions in accordance with published guidelines.

2.5 TOURNAMENT PROTEST COMMITTEE

- C. **Composition:** The Protest Committee is chaired by one Deputy Regional Director and consists of two State Presidents and three State Representatives.
- D. **Responsibilities:** The Protest Committee hears any formal protest submitted.

2.6 TOURNAMENT APPEALS COMMITTEES

- A. **Composition:** The Appeals Committee is chaired by one Deputy Regional Director and consists of two State Presidents and three State Representatives.
- B. **Responsibilities:** The Appeals Committee reviews any appeals submitted based on the initial decisions of the Protest Committee. The decisions of the Appeals Committee are binding at the regional level and cannot be further appealed.

2.7 REGIONAL REFEREE ADMINISTRATOR

The Regional Referee Administrator (RRA), who represents the region on the National Referee Committee, selects, assigns, and oversees game officials at the regional tournament. In addition, the RRA, with the support of US Soccer, develops and administers training and assessment programs to promote quality and consistency in officiating at the regional level.

3. STATE HOSTING REQUIREMENTS

3.1 VENUE SELECTION PROCESS

The Region III Presidents select the venues for the Southern Regional Tournament. The Presidents will accept bids from all state associations in Region III to hold the regional tournament within their state. Such bids will be submitted directly to the Region III Tournament Chairman, with a copy to the Deputy Director in charge of competition programs. These bids must be submitted by the Region III Fall Workshops – approximately 32 months prior to the tournament they are bidding on.

A. Bids

Bids will be distributed to the Region III Cup Committee for review. Site visits will be conducted by the RTC or selected members of the Region III Cup Committee prior to a final decision on submitted bids. States who have submitted bids may choose to make a formal presentation.

After the site visit, The Region III Cup Committee will then make a final recommendation to the Presidents and a decision will be made at the Presidents meeting held at the US Youth Soccer Workshop. The goal is to award bids at least two years in advance. See Calendar of Key Events.

The bid package should contain details on the following areas:

- Complete description of city and surrounding areas. Include maps with the key locations indicated. List places to go, things to see, etc.
- Detailed description of events planned, such as opening event, social events, hospitality for participants, etc.
- Weather information
- Use of Region III Web site - Publicity plans – media coverage.
- Plans for medical/ambulances on site.
- Plans for the official web page.

3.2 FINANCES

A working budget must be submitted with the initial bid package. Amended budgets should be submitted to the RTC and Regional Director in a timely fashion. Funds will be advanced to the Host State as a need is shown by the HOC. A draft budget is included in the appendix. Please make sure to note those expenses covered by Region III.

3.3 CONTRACTS

The Region III Director must approve and sign all contracts. Signed contracts must be obtained for:

- Sponsor participation
- Merchandise sales
- Hotels
- Food concessions

Host state association must adhere to guidelines established by each of the national sponsors involved in the tournament. Additional contracts may be needed. Programs will contain ads according to the contracts US Soccer has negotiated.

3.4 **HOST ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

The host state shall appoint a Host Committee Chairperson. The chair will be the liaison between the HOC and the Region III Cup Committee. At a minimum, the HOC should assign committee members to the following areas:

- Fields/Venues
- Field Marshall/parking volunteers
- Referees
- Media/Publicity
- Concessions (Merchandise and food)
- Lodging and Transportation
- Treasurer/Financial Officer
- Program/Advertising
- Communications
- VIP Packets
- Medical

The HOC should begin holding monthly meetings a minimum of eighteen months prior to the event. Key members of the HOC should plan on attending the regional tournament to be held the year prior to their hosted event. Cost for this trip is the responsibility of the host state association. Meeting frequency should be increased to weekly meetings within three months of the tournament. The Region III Cup Committee is to be supplied with minutes of all HOC meetings in a timely fashion.

3.5 **HOSTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Host State must meet the following minimum requirements:

A. Playing Sites

1. Fields:
 - A minimum of 16 fields is required to host.
 - Field sizes will be coordinated with the member of the RTC in charge of the tournament schedule.
 - A contact name and phone number for the field complex is to be given to the RTC and/or the RTC member in charge of the tournament schedule.
 - All fields will be marked according to FIFA guidelines.
 - All fields will be marked prior to the beginning of the tournament and at least one or more time during the tournament if deemed necessary by the RTC.
 - Nets, corner flags and markings are the responsibility of the HOC.
2. Trailers:
 - Separate trailers will be brought in if needed, as determined by the RTC. The headquarters trailer will have a copier, office supplies, one (1) phone line and air conditioning. An adequate number of tables and chairs must be provided. The referee trailer must also be air conditioned.
3. Tents:
 - Two 20' x 40' tents should be available for the referees, along with an adequate number of tables and chairs.

It is preferred that the fields be located at a single site. If multiple sites are necessary, a reasonable distance between playing sites would be expected.

The playing venues should ideally be no more than 30 minutes driving time from team lodging. The site(s) must have good access from major highways in the area and ample parking space for teams, administrators, referees and spectators.

Adequate practice fields, separate from the playing pitches to be used for the tournament, shall be available for all participating teams. These practice fields should be in close proximity to the teams' lodging facilities.

B. Medical Treatment and First Aid

The Host Organizing Committee shall provide paramedical facilities and personnel at each venue. Medical personnel must be present at each venue during the competition. Medical personnel shall consist of both trainers and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) trained to recognize and treat trauma. The medical personnel shall have direct communication with a trauma center and transportation thereto. At least one ambulance must be located at each venue. The medical facility shall be supplied with the appropriate supplies to treat emergencies, as well as abrasions, bruises, insect bites, exhaustion, heat induced problems, and preventative taping.

C. Hotels

A hotel will be chosen to be the Region III Headquarters hotel. All tournament personnel will be lodged at this facility. This hotel will be selected in conjunction with the Region III Tournament Committee.

- The Region III Headquarters Hotel will need to meet the following minimum requirements:
 - a) 10 rooms for regional staff – 2 of those rooms need to be suites. The suites will be provided for the Regional Director and the Regional Tournament Chair. Additional rooms may be necessary.
 - b) 20 double/double rooms for State Presidents, State Reps and other VIPs.
- A second hotel will be selected for use by the Referees. This hotel needs to meet the following minimum requirements:
 - a) At least 3 rooms for staff – 1 of those rooms need to be a suite.
 - b) At least 100 double/double rooms for referees.
- The following minimum requirements are necessary to house teams/parents:
 - a) 2,944 rooms (184 teams x 16 rooms per team)
 - b) 80% of rooms must be double/doubles (two queens or two double beds)

A procedure should be in place that coordinates all team room bookings through a housing coordinator to insure that double-bookings do not occur. Room bookings are to be handled by each state. No teams are to directly book rooms. It is appropriate for the HOC to receive a rebate on room bookings if desired.

D. Meeting Rooms

The following meeting/hospitality room accommodations are required:

- Credentials Check-in.
Requires a large sized room with tables to accommodate team check-in. It should be available two days before start of the tournament. A copier will need to be in the room during credentials check-in. Beverage service will be needed and possibly lunch service.
- Goody Bag Distribution Center
Available the day prior to the start of the tournament for coaches to pick up tournament supplies and equipment.
- Hospitality Center
Available each day of the tournament for VIPs. This room will be at the tournament site and will provide a place for VIPs to meet and relax.
- Referee Meeting
Accommodate 250 people. Available one day prior to start of the tournament and each evening during the tournament. This room should be at the facility housing the referees.
- Referee Assigning Suite
Must be equipped with supplies as requested by the Regional Referee Administrator.

E. Opening Ceremony/Event

The format for the opening event shall be at the discretion of the host committee, with approval by the RTC. It may or may not include formal introduction of the tournament participants.

F. Communications

The following equipment should be available:

- A minimum number of walkie-talkies for the Regional Tournament Committee, State Representatives and others, as determined by the RTC. The walkie-talkies need to have a minimum of six (6) channels available for tournament usage. Separate channels are needed for: Regional Staff, HOC Staff, Medical, Referees, Scorekeeping/field marshals/complex personnel, and a privacy channel.

G. Golf Carts

The following minimum number of golf carts needs to be available for transportation at the playing venue:

- 4 carts for regional staff (2 should have rear passenger seats)
- 4 carts for referee staff (all should have rear passenger seat)
- 1 cart for media (back seat optional)
- 3 carts for medical
- A minimum of 12 carts for State Reps use. (These carts may be rented by the State for use during the tournament. If the number allows, States may rent more than one cart.)

H. Awards

Trophies, medals, and patches are ordered by the region. The HOC will inventory the medals and trophies and will bag the medals in counts of 22 to a bag. If provided by US Youth Soccer, Fair Play awards and pins will also be sent to the host state, and should be bagged in the same manner.

I. Transportation

Personal contact must be made with major airlines to insure adequate flights are available to handle arrival and departure of teams. Car rental agencies must be personally contacted to insure extra vans/cars are on site for use by tournament participants.

J. Goody Bags

All players and coaches shall receive goody bags upon arrival at the tournament. The following must be included in the goody bag:

- Tournament program
- Tournament pin
- Parking passes (minimum of 2 per team if required)
- Additional items at the discretion of the HOC

K. Tournament Program

A souvenir program must be printed and put in the goody bags of all participants, administrators, and referees. All teams shall receive 22 complimentary souvenir programs. Additional programs should be available for purchase.

The program must be printed on high quality paper, with a four-color cover of quality cover-weight paper. Advertising may be sold to help cover the production costs. Advertising space must be reserved for all national sponsors as specified in contracts. A draft copy of the program must be presented to and approved by the Region III Director prior to publication. The program should contain at a minimum:

- Welcoming Letters
- Schedule of Events
- List of teams
- Playing Schedule
- Maps
- Scorekeeping space

L. Tournament Pins

All teams shall receive 22 complimentary souvenir pins. The HOC may choose to purchase additional pins for sale.

M. VIP Packets

The following are suggested contents for the "Welcome" or "VIP" packets. The host state will be responsible for the assembly and distribution of the packets. Region III will provide polo shirts for the packets.

PRESIDENTS (12)

Polo Shirt
Tournament T-Shirt
Tournament Pin
Parking Pass
Tournament Program

STATE REPS (12-24)

Polo shirt
Tournament tee-shirt
Tournament Pin
Parking Pass
Tournament Program
All giveaway items

REFEREES

Polo shirt
Flip coin
Parking Pass
Tournament Program
All giveaway items

COLLEGE COACHES

Team Rosters
Tournament Program
Parking Pass
All giveaway items

REGIONAL STAFF

Polo Shirt
Logo T-shirt
Tournament Pin
Parking Pass
Tournament Program
All giveaway items

Regional staff distribution:

Regional Tournament Chairman
Regional Director
Regional Deputy Directors (2)
Regional Secretary
Regional Treasurer
Regional Tournament Administrator
Regional Rules Administrator
Regional Referee Administrator
Regional Webmaster

Note: Packets are to be distributed at time of credentials check-in. All VIP packets can contain additional gifts at the discretion of the Host Committee.

3.6 NON-COMPLIANCE

The host National State Association shall comply with all the requirements of the Regional Championship Manual for Hosting. Non-compliance of these requirements by the host NSA shall result in possible fines and/or other disciplinary actions as recommended by the Regional Director and approved by the Regional President's Council.

3.7 CALENDAR OF KEY DATES

A master calendar or timeline is essential to the smooth and efficient operation of the regional championship tournament. The calendar suggested below should be used as a guideline. It may be altered year to year as circumstances dictate. The date "T" represents the first day of the tournament.

- A. **T minus 32 months (October):** State associations submit bids for consideration to the Regional Tournament Chair, with a copy to the Deputy Director. The RTC will notify the state association if the bids meet regional requirements. In conjunction with the submitting of bids, an initial presentation can be made at the Region III Fall Workshop.
- B. **T minus 30 months (December):** Regional Tournament Chairperson conducts site visits.
- C. **T Minus 28 months (February):** Region III Cup Committee makes venue selection recommendations to the President's Council at US YOUTH SOCCER National Workshop. Council makes selection(s).
- D. **T minus 24 months (June):** Host defines sub-committees and appoints chairpersons. HOC begins monthly meetings.
- E. **T minus 16 months (February):** Host Committee Chair attends sponsor seminar at the National Workshop.
- F. **T minus 12 months (June):** HOC contacts prospective sponsors.
- G. **T minus 8 months (October):** RTC and HOC Chair give status reports to Regional Council at Region III Workshop.
- H. **T minus 8 months (October):** Hotel selection is done by State Reps at October meeting.
- I. **T minus 8 months (October):** RTC Chair recommends changes to the tournament playing rules and administrative policies and procedures for consideration and decision by the Regional President's Council.
- J. **T minus 8 months (October):** RTC Chair makes site visit to tournament facilities (optional).
- K. **T minus 4 months (February):** HOC presents status report to Regional Council at the National Workshop.

- L. **T minus 4 months (February):** RTC delivers instructions to state associations.
- M. **T minus 3 months (March):** HOC begins weekly meetings.
- N. **T minus 3 months (March):** RTC attends HOC Organizational meeting. Final site visit.
- O. **T minus 3 months (March):** RRA sends referee notices to SYRA's.

March 1 : State associations submit entry forms and all fees to the Region III Office, attention Regional Treasurer.

May 15: All credentials forms must be returned to Credentials Chair.

- P. **T minus 1 month (May):** Deadline for SYRA's to submit referee applications to RRA for assignments.

Mid-May:

- Deadline for state associations to withdraw teams without penalties is 45 days from the first day of the tournament.
- State associations begin submitting team rosters to Credentials Chair.
- HOC mails information packets to states for distribution to qualified teams.
- Tournament information posted to the region web page.
- Draft tournament program submitted to Regional Director for review.

- Q. **T minus 21 days:** RTC approves and distributes final playing schedule.
- R. **T minus 21 days:** RRA begins scheduling referees for specific tournament matches.
- S. **T minus 2 days:** RTC arrives at host site headquarters.

T. T minus 1 day:

- Teams arrive
- Credentials check-in
- Coaches meeting
- Opening Event
- Referee Clinic at host site

- U. **Post Tournament (July):** RTC distributes tournament results to Regional Director. Includes Fair Play recipients.

- V. **Post Tournament (October):** HOC submits Tournament Report to the Regional Director and the RTC and the next host state. The final installment of the Host State Subsidy will be distributed upon receipt of this report.

4. CREDENTIALS PROCEDURES

4.1 CREDENTIALS

The team, player and coach credentials' process shall follow strict guidelines and procedures as set forth in Rules 221, 224, 241, and 226 of US Youth Soccer National Cup Rules.

The credential process shall consist of three (3) components:

1. Submission of all forms and payment of fees, per Rule 105 and any others that may apply.
2. Submission of official certified league roster, official BLUE ROSTER, plus additional copies as determined by the RTC of the official BLUE ROSTER by the deadline date.
3. Credential check-in process at the tournament site.

4.2 DUTIES OF STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Each State Association shall appoint or designate an individual as its State Cup Representative to be responsible for the proper registration and eligibility of its players and teams. Each State Youth Association will be held responsible via its State Cup Representative or designee for certifying the credentials of its teams and players, and to provide all necessary forms. Failure to comply with all rules and procedures can lead to disciplinary action.

4.3 DUTIES OF STATE CUP REPRESENTATIVE

Each State Cup Representative shall be responsible for the proper submission of documents to the Regional Tournament Chairman, or his designee, in a timely manner. Such documents are to be prepared and submitted according to Rules 221, 224, and 241 of the current US Youth Soccer National Cup Rules.

The State Cup Representative shall be responsible for all communications regarding the Regional Cup Competitions to the coaches and/or team officials from that State Youth Association. This responsibility includes communication and liaison between the Regional Tournament Chair, the local tournament chairman, and the team officials for that State during their actual tenure at the tournament.

The Cup Representative is responsible for distributing the US Youth Soccer Rules to each coach or team official. Each State Cup Representative shall be responsible for the behavior of the teams, coaches, and team officials from their State Association during the competition.

4.4 CREDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STATE CUP REPRESENTATIVE

It is the responsibility of each State Cup Representative to make sure that US Youth Soccer rules pertaining to eligibility of teams and players have been met.

States hold the primary responsibility on eligibility of players and teams upon submission of rosters. All documentation should be checked several times by different individuals to make sure all data is correct.

Only players listed on the Official Blue Roster will be allowed to participate in the Regional Competition.

A. Acceptable Proof of Age is as follows:

Proof of age shall consist of a birth certificate, a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States, birth registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records, a passport, an alien registration card issued by the United States Government, a certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age, a current driver's license, an unexpired federal, state, or local government identification card (if documentation of date of birth is required), or a certification of a United States citizen born abroad issued by the appropriate government agency. **Hospital, baptismal or religious certificates will not be accepted, as per Rule 204 of the US Youth Soccer Playing Rules.**

NOTE: Proof of age in foreign languages must have English translation attached to the original document. Translations may be provided by anyone recognized as a translator by the US Youth Soccer National State Association governing that player. No parent or other family member can translate for any member of their son's or daughter's team unless they are certified and or accredited to teach the specific language, i.e. high school teacher, professor of languages at a university or college, a court translator, or anyone recognized as an official translator by a governing body. All translations will be dated and include qualifications to translate, signature, address and telephone number of the translator.

4.5 CHECKLIST FOR STATE CUP REPRESENTATIVES

According to the US Youth Soccer Rules indicated, the signature of the State Youth Commissioner or President, or their designee, on a Cup Roster, testifies that the following items have been verified:

Rule 224	Player Eligibility
Rule 241	Player Passes and Rosters

Prior to submitting team rosters to the RTC, the State Cup Representative should go through the following checklist for each team:

A. ROSTERS

1. Proof of age documents which are acceptable to the Region III Cup Committee have been inspected and these documents agree with the birth information shown on the roster for each player listed.
2. All players' names and information must be typed and signatures correspond with typed names. First and last names required.
3. A player must be properly registered and rostered in accordance with the rules of US Youth Soccer and the State Association.
4. Each player on the roster has been registered with the State Youth Association on the approved US Youth Soccer form.
5. The team has not been subject to more than five (5) previously rostered players during the current seasonal year. (Rule 221, Section 2 (a) (1))

6. All players on a team must be listed on the roster, whether they are healthy or not. Once the US Youth Soccer National Championship Blue Roster is submitted a player can be deleted, but not added.
7. The team roster was named prior to the team's first game in the State Cup Competition. (Rule 221, Section 6).
8. A player may play for only one team in the National Championships competitions in any seasonal year. If a player is on the roster of a team when the roster is named under Sections 6 and 7 of Rule 221, the player may not be on the roster of any other team for National Championships competitions for that seasonal year (Rule 224, Section 2)
9. All players listed on the US Youth Soccer National Championship Blue Roster form display:
 - The name as shown on proof of age document
 - Correct birth date for player
 - US Youth Soccer Member Pass Card ID number
 - Jersey number and alternate jersey number
 - Player's signature (BLACK OR BLUE INK ONLY – NO NICKNAMES)
 - Player's position
 - Player's year of graduation
10. Roster must have listed:
 - name of State Association
 - name of team, age group of team, gender of team
 - names/addresses/phone numbers of coaches, team managers, trainers
 - If you use back of roster for additional data, you must copy all data on all roster copies.
 - team uniform colors for shirts/shorts/socks plus alternate uniform colors
 - Wild Card teams must display a WC or the words Wild Card in the upper right hand corner of the roster.
 - Premiere League teams must display PL North, PL South, PL East or PL West in the upper right hand corner of the roster.
11. The roster must list players in alphabetical order and must be signed by the State Youth Association Commissioner/President or their designee and the team coach attesting all documentation is true and correct.

B. PLAYER AND ADMINISTRATOR PASSES

Each coach shall have a US Youth Soccer Member Card clearly marked "COACH PASS" which will contain the same data as on the player member card, expect date of birth.

Each player/coach shall have been issued a US Youth Soccer member card with the following typed information:

- Player name
- Team name
- Team age group (U12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19)
- Team gender (B for Boys, G for Girls; or M for Male, F for Female)
- Birth date of player (02/26/99)

- State Association name
- Current photo of player/coach (head/shoulder, face on) Must be minimum of 1 ¼ x 1 ¼ inch picture. Typically school or drivers license size.
- Signatures of State Youth Commissioner or designee, player, coach.

ALL cards must be completely laminated in plastic. No open sides or ends.

5. RULES

5.1 General Information

A. Fees

a) Entry Fees

A \$300 entry fee is required for each team participating. The entry fee may be posted by a single National State Association check to cover all teams entered into the competition. A check should be made payable to US Youth Soccer Region III and is due in the Regional Office by March 1.

b) Premier League Slot entry fees will be paid by the Premier League directly to the Region III office by March 1.

c) Regional administrative entry fees are not assessed for the Region III Championships.

d) Performance Bonds

A performance bond is required to each team participating in the Region III Championships. The bond is held until the end of the tournament at which time it will be returned to the National State Association under the condition that the team has met its obligations. Each team shall post a \$100 performance bond. The bond may be posted by a single National State Association check to cover all teams entered into the competition. The bond check should be made payable to US Youth Soccer Region III' and is due in the Regional Office by May 15th.

e) Forfeiture of Bond

The performance bond may be forfeited by:

- A team's failure to be present and on time for the Opening Ceremony/Social.
- A team's failure to start play at the scheduled times plus grace period.
- A team's failure to participate in the awards ceremonies.

If a performance bond is forfeited a new performance bond must be posted before a team may play its next scheduled game.

B. Discipline

Tournament discipline will be the responsibility of the RTC and/or the Region III Conduct Committee. Any extenuating circumstances that would prevent a team from complying with all requirements must be submitted to the RTC in writing prior to the tournament.

Failure to comply with requirements could result in a fine, probation, suspension or a combination of these determinations. In the event that a recommendation by the Conduct Committee is made: disciplining of the team, player, coach, etc. is the responsibility of the State Association and all performance bonds from that state will be held until appropriate action is taken.

C. Late Withdrawal

In the event that a team from either a State Association or the Premier League withdraws from the tournament a nonappearance fine will be assessed as follows:

- 45 days from the beginning of the tournament - \$750
- 30 days from the beginning of the tournament - \$1000
- 20 days from the beginning of the tournament - \$1500
- 15 days from the beginning of the tournament - \$2000
- 10 days from the beginning of the tournament - \$3000

The team's National State Association shall pay the fine to Region III.

D. Rosters

- a) US Youth Soccer Blue Roster
 - The target date for the US Youth Soccer Official Roster to be submitted to the Region III RTC is June 1, except where the State Cup is played after June 1, in which case rosters must be submitted within two days after completion of State Cup play.
 - The official US Youth Soccer Blue Roster form must be typed. Rosters with incomplete information will be returned for completion and the State Association will be assessed a fifty dollar (\$50) fine that must be paid prior to the competition.
- b) US Youth Soccer White National Roster
 - The official US Youth Soccer White National Roster form must be typed and ready for team check-in one hour prior to the Championship match.
 - Rosters with incomplete information will be returned for correction prior to the Championship match.

E. Mandatory Registration

- a) Registration of teams will be on the day prior to the start of the beginning of competition.
- b) A team representative must register the team.
- c) All teams must have their US Youth Soccer Player and/or coach passes. The pass shall have a current photograph, the player's/coach's signature, the signature of the State Youth Commissioner or designee. The pass must be laminated with a material that allows this information to be seen and allows the pass to be punched. Teams, players and coaches without their US Youth Soccer passes cannot compete in the Region III Championship.
- d) Each player must have a current year, original Medical Release Form.
- e) Players who are unable to sign the US Youth Soccer Official Roster form at their State Cup Final are still eligible to compete at the Region III Championship, and must come to registration with their US Youth Soccer player pass and sign the Official Roster.
- f) Every State Association must have a State Representative available during registration.

F. Mandatory Opening Ceremony

- a) There will be a mandatory opening ceremony on the day prior to the start of the beginning of competition.
- b) Failure to be present and on time for the Ceremony will result in forfeiture of the performance bond. Players must be dressed uniformly. Team attire must be clean, neat and appropriate to the occasion. Shoes must be worn. The coach and team players must participate.

G. Scheduling of Games

- a) The RTC is responsible for developing the schedule of games. The HOC may be asked to provide information on field size, location, and availability to assist in the scheduling process.
- b) Preliminary schedule is developed in May based on initial entries submitted by states.
- c) Final schedule submitted to the HOC for the program during the first week in June.
- d) If teams withdraw prior to 14 days of the start of the tournament, wildcards may be used as replacement teams.
- e) If teams withdraw within 14 days of the start of the tournament, teams may not be replaced. Scheduled opponents could receive a "bye game" during the preliminary round.
- f) The best scheduling to ensure maximum rest for each team is to play one game per day. All teams are entitled to sufficient rest between games. If it is necessary to schedule two matches on the same day, four and one-half hours between the scheduled start of two successive games is considered to be sufficient rest.

Within the limits imposed by these rules and guidelines and by uncontrollable external conditions, the schedule is developed in an objective manner with no favoritism shown to specific teams or state associations.

5.2 COMPETITION FORMAT

A. Format

a) Round-Robin

- Wildcard teams will be used as necessary to bring age divisions to an even number of teams.
- Teams are not seeded. Placement within the brackets is by random draw, conducted at the workshop.
- Each age group will be divided into three or four team sub-groups. The teams in each sub-group will play three preliminary round-robin games according to established matrices. Advancement to the quarter-final or semi-final round will be determined as follows.

b) Quarter Finals

- Quarter finals will be played in divisions of 16 teams.
- Quarter finals are single elimination format. Winners of the quarter-final matches will advance to the semi-finals.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, two complete overtime periods will be played at the end of normal playing time. The duration of the overtime periods will be two 10 minute halves for u14 and two 15 minutes halves for u15 and older.
- If at the end of the overtime periods a tie still exists, the game result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with FIFA rules.

c) Semi-finals and Finals

- Games are single elimination format. Winners of these rounds advance to the next round.
- There are no consolation games to determine 3rd and 4th place. The teams that do not advance from the semi-finals will be awarded 3rd place.
- In 12 team groups, teams from the same bracket, or teams that have already played each other in the round-robin, will not play each other in the semi-final games.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, two complete overtime periods will be played at the end of normal playing time. The duration of the overtime periods will be two 10 minute halves for u14 and two 15 minutes halves for u15 and older.
- If at the end of the overtime periods a tie still exists, the game result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with FIFA rules.

B. Playing Matrix

1. 12 Team Division

A	B	C
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12

No quarter final will be played.

- Semi Final #1: Winner A v Wildcard
- Semi Final #2: Winner B v Winner C
- If the Wildcard comes from Group A, then Winner A v Winner C and Winner B v Wildcard.

2. 16 Team Division

A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

Quarterfinals will be played.

- Winner A v 2nd B
- Winner B v 2nd A
- Winner C v 2nd D
- Winner D v 2nd C

The winners of each quarterfinal will play in the semi-finals.

- Semi Final #1: Winner A v 2nd B v Winner C v 2nd D
- Semi Final #2: Winner B v 2nd A v Winner D v 2nd C

C. Wildcards

1. Age groups will consist of either 12 or 16 team divisions, which will then be divided into sub-groups of four teams. To meet these requirements, wildcards will be drawn if necessary.

Immediately after the random draw, wildcards will be chosen starting with the oldest girl's group, proceeding through the girls and on to the boys, oldest to youngest. After the initial draw, wildcards will be sought if a team withdraws from an age group. One wildcard team per State per tournament unless no other state can fill the slot.

a) Order of selection of wildcards

1. Host State
2. #1 State in random draw for age/gender group
3. #2 State, #3 State, etc.

A State may decline a wildcard slot in any age/gender division, and the order selection proceeds. Pairings will not be changed to accommodate states. A State's team and wildcard team may be in the same bracket.

D. Premiere League

1. In the u14-u18 age groups, the Premier league will receive four Premier League slots bringing the number of teams in these age groups to 16 teams.

- Pairings will not be changed to accommodate states. A State's team and PL team may be in the same bracket.

E. Official Game Cards

The official records of the tournament are the game cards filled out by the referees and retained by the RTC. The format and content of the cards are established by the RTC and the RRA, in consultation with the NCC. The contents include the following information:

- Game information – date, location, game number
- Scheduled and actual start times
- Division of play – age and gender
- Team names – designated as “home” and “away”
- Team uniform colors
- Name of team taking opening kickoff
- Jersey numbers of players who scored
- Game time of scores
- Final score of the game
- Coaches Name
- Details on cautions and sendoffs
- Notation for any person sitting out a Red Card suspension
- Referee comments
- Referee signatures

F. Game Balls

Each team shall be able to provide a game ball at each game. Note: The game ball for each age group MUST meet US Youth Soccer requirements. Once the game begins, a protest cannot be lodged because of an illegal ball.

G. Grace Periods

Any team not ready to play at the scheduled start 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 RTC by the referee. The RTC shall decide when a forfeit is declared.

The team not ready to play may be judged to have forfeited its performance bond. A minimum of seven (7) players constitutes a legal team.

H. Home Team – Visiting Team

The team listed first is the home team. The visiting team will have the choice of jersey colors. If, in the opinion of the referee there is a color conflict, the home team shall change jerseys.

I. Decorum

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of themselves, their coaching staff and their players. Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in this policy, including cautions, ejections and standard suspension. 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 US Youth Soccer and the Region III Championships.

J. Team and Spectator Location

The teams will sit on the opposite side of the fields from the spectators. Teams will be separated by the table/bench/chair for the fourth official.

K. Team Bench and Sidelines

Teams and team officials (maximum of four people can represent the team officials, e.g. coach, assistant coach, manager, trainer) may be on the bench. Team official identification passes (maximum four per team) will only be issued to those individuals who have State Team Official Passes and are duly authorized by their State Association. The identification passes will be issued at Registration by the Region III Championship Committee.

L. Uniforms

Each player must wear an official uniform with a six-inch minimum size number on the back of the shirt (this includes goalies). Duplicate numbers are not permitted.

M. Equipment

The wearing of shin guards is mandatory for all players. A player will not be allowed to play without wearing them at all times during a game.

N. Player/ Team Official Passes

Before each game, the referee or linesman will receive the player and team official passes from either the field marshal or coach. The passes will remain with them for the duration of the game. It will be the responsibility of each coach, at the end of the game, to obtain his or her passes.

O. Determination of Winners

a) Scoring Method in Round-Robin

In preliminary round-robin games, team standings shall be determined by accumulation of points awarded as follows:

Win (including forfeit)	3 points
Tie	1 point
Loss	0 points

There will be no overtime played during the round-robin portion of the tournament.

P. Advancement

The team earning the most points in each group will advance to the next round of the tournament. In groups of 12 teams, the team with the most points after the group winners are declared will advance as the wildcard. In groups of 16 teams, the teams with the 2nd highest points in each bracket will advance as the best 2nd.

In groups where crossover games are scheduled, count only the game points earned within the bracket to determine the bracket winner. To determine the wildcard team, count all game points earned, including crossover game points.

Q. Tiebreakers

In case two or more teams accumulate an equal number of points within any group, the following tiebreakers will be considered in order until the tie is broken:

- 1) Winner of head-to-head game unless a three-way tie exists; #2 is used first if this happens;
- 2) Most wins;
- 3) Team with greatest net goal difference (NGD) which is computed as 'goals for' minus 'goals against' with a maximum of 3 NGD per game;
- 4) Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker);
- 5) Team with the most goals (maximum of 3 goals per game).

The same tiebreakers will be used to determine wildcard teams.

- a) If two teams are still tied after computing all of the listed tiebreakers, the result shall be decided by kicks from the penalty mark in accordance with the FIFA procedure. The coach shall make player selection for such kicks from the team's eligible roster independent of any other game lineup. If necessary, the RTC may direct that such kicks be taken immediately preceding the next level of competition.
- b) If three teams are still tied, after computing the listed tiebreakers, the winner shall be determined by the drawing of lots conducted by the RTC or his/her designated official in an open and public manner.

If more than two (2) teams are tied at the end of the preliminary round, the tiebreaker criteria listed will be used in order shown, beginning at #2, to either advance or eliminate one team. When two teams remain they will then be compared, beginning again with criteria #1, to determine the ultimate placement.

R. Forfeiture Rule

In the event a team in round-robin competition forfeits any match, the official game scores for all of that team's games will be recorded as 3-0 losses. A team that forfeits a match will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.

S. Unfinished Games

Unfinished games due to any cause shall be replayed providing 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 RTC, and provided neither team is at fault, the Region III Tournament Committee 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 Region III Tournament Committee as to whether the game is to be replayed, stand as is, or declared a forfeit.

T. Terminated Games

Once play has begun, games may only be terminated by the RTC or his/her representative.

5.3 EJECTIONS

A. Player Ejection:

- a) A player who is sent off must be escorted from the field by a person with a bench pass to the designated red card holding area.
- b) The player's pass, together with the referee report, shall be turned over to the RTC or his/her designee by the referee.
- c) The minimum penalty for an ejection is that the player shall not be permitted to play in the immediate next competition match of his or her team. This penalty may be increased at the determination of the Region III Conduct Committee.
- d) Any appeal of an increased suspension by the Region III Conduct Committee must be submitted in writing to the Region III Appeals Committee within two hours of notification of increased suspension.
- e) If the team of an ejected player allows the player to participate in the game he or she is to be sitting out, that team will automatically forfeit the game.
- f) A red-carded player may return to the complex the next day but he/she must sit on the spectator side of the field as a spectator. He cannot use a bench pass to sit with the team.
- g) The Regional Deputy Director shall notify the player's State Representative of the send-off. The player's pass shall be returned to the State Representative following the disciplinary period.

B. Coach or Bench Personnel Ejection:

- a) If a coach or bench pass person is ejected from any game, they will be escorted by the State Representative out of sight and sound of the field. He or she must then leave the tournament site.
- b) The coach's pass together with the referee's report of the incident shall be turned over to the Region III Conduct Committee by the referee.
- c) The minimum penalty for the ejection is a one game suspension to be served in their next immediately following championship game played by the team where the ejection was received.
- d) The penalty may be increased at the determination of the Region III Conduct Committee. Any appeal of an increased suspension must be submitted in writing to the Region III Appeals Committee within two hours of notification of the increased suspension.
- e) 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 US Youth Soccer and the Region III Championships.

C. Player and Coach Suspension

Any player, coach or bench personnel who has been suspended for the Region III Championship may appeal the decision to the Region III Tournament Appeals Committee. This appeal must be made within two hours of notification of the suspension.

5.4 PROTESTS

All questions relating to the qualifications of the competitors or interpretation of the rules, or any dispute or protest shall be referred to the Region III Tournament Protest committee.

A. Validity

To be valid and eligible for consideration, each protest:

- a) Must be verbally 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 noted in C below.
- b) Must be filed with the Chair of the Protest Committee or his/her representative within two hours of the completion of the game in protest and include:
 1. A fee in the amount of \$100. This fee may be in cash, cashier's check or money order.
 2. Personal checks will not be accepted. Checks or money orders must be made payable to US Youth Soccer Region III.
 3. Ten written copies of the protest, which must include full particulars of the ground on which the protest is lodged.
 4. Ten written copies of any information to be presented by witnesses.

B. Timing

- a) Game Situations
All protest must be received by the Chair of the Protest Committee or his/her or designee within two hours of the completion of the game being protested.
- b) Non-game situations
All protest must be received by the Chair of the Protest Committee or his/her or designee within four hours of the scheduled start time of the last game in the bracket or division in question, whichever is latest.

C. Playing Conditions

All protest 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.

D. Procedures

The Committee 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 plea of ignorance to the rules and regulations of the Region III Championship is not sufficient grounds for protest. Judgment decisions of the referee are not subject to protest.

The Committee shall compile the necessary information to hear the protest, from all available sources before the protest is heard. This shall include, if possible, coaches, field marshals, referees, assessors, witnesses if necessary, etc. All materials will be treated with confidentiality.

After compiling the necessary information, the committee will meet to conduct the protest hearing. The decisions of the committee shall be binding on all parties.

The Region III D&P committee will notify the parties of the committee's decision.

5.5 APPEALS

The decisions of the Region III Championship Committee and the Tournament Conduct and Protest Committees may be appealed to the Region III Tournament Appeals Committee. The appellant shall bear the burden of showing that the decision being appealed is clearly erroneous. No new evidence may be presented to the Appeals Committee unless circumstances have materially changed, or new facts are discovered that were unavailable at the time of the original hearing.

- a) An appeal must be filed with the Chairman of the Appeals Committee or their representative within two hours of notification of the Conduct or Protest Committees decision and include:
 - 1. A fee in the amount of \$200. This fee may be in cash, cashiers check or money order.
 - 2. Personal checks will not be accepted. Cashiers checks and money orders must be payable to US Youth Soccer Region III.
 - 3. Ten written copies of the appeal.
- b) Ignorance
 - 1. A plea of ignorance to the rules of the competition is not sufficient grounds for appeals or protests.
- c) Judgment decisions
 - 1. Judgment decisions of the referees are not subject to appeal or protest.

5.6 RULES OF COMPETITION

Except as otherwise provided herein, the rules of the US Youth Soccer and the FIFA "Laws of the Game" shall apply.

A. Substitutions

The number of substitutions shall be unlimited. Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee, at the following times:

- 1. Prior to a throw-in in your favor.
- 2. Prior to a goal kick by either team.
- 3. After a goal by either team.
- 4. After an injury by either team when the referee stops play.
- 5. At half time.
- 6. When the referee stops play to caution a player, only the cautioned player may be substituted prior to the restart of the game.

B. Player Equipment

- 1. The referee is the sole judge of allowed player equipment as prescribed the FIFA Laws of the Game.