



US YOUTH SOCCER

2022-23 SUNSHINE CONFERENCE OPERATING PROCEDURES

(As of June 1, 2022)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the US Youth Soccer National League Conference Rules (10.06) these Sunshine Conference Operating Procedures shall be an extension of the National League Conference Rules. When National League Conference Rules are referenced or summarized in these Operating Procedures, they are meant to mirror the National League Conference Rules in every respect. These Operating Procedures are specific to the US Youth Soccer Sunshine Conference.

SECTION 1. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – TEAM APPLICATION

1.01 Team Eligibility

Any team applying for entry into the Sunshine Conference must meet the eligibility requirements in accordance with the National League Rules.

1.02 Registration System / Process

GotSport shall be the official team application/registration system of the Sunshine Conference. Any eligible team must register their team into the Conference using GotSport. No registrations will be received or accepted in any other system.

Eligible teams must have a GotSport account in order to register into the Sunshine Conference. Team accounts must have accurate information regarding the coach and manager at the time of submission. In completing any registration into the Sunshine Conference teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from conference participation.

1.03 Registration Deadlines

14U-19U Sunshine Conference Application Deadline: June 17, 2022.

13U Sunshine Conference Application Deadline: June 17, 2022.

1.04 Registration Agreement

Any team applying to play in a Conference agrees to accept, abide by, and comply with all policies, rules, and decisions of the National League and further agrees to pay all fees that are due to the Conference for participation in the Conference by the applicable deadlines.

1.05 State Association Registration

To be eligible for participation in the Sunshine Conference a team must be properly registered with their respective member State Association prior to acceptance into the Conference.

1.06 Fees and Other Expenses

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the Sunshine Conference is \$900 per team (paid to your state association) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the Conference and later drops out. State Association's may have a higher entry fee to cover additional costs associated with the Conference. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with Section 8 (Referees) of this document. Team Fees are paid

to your respective State Association and are to be paid to your State Association as determined by your local State Association. The State Association pays US Youth Soccer for all teams entered in the Sunshine Conference. Teams do not pay entry fees directly to US Youth Soccer.

1.07 National League Showcase Requirement

Teams understand that all 15U-18U teams competing in a top tier within the USYS National League Sunshine Conference during the 2022-23 season must attend a minimum of one (1) USYS National Showcase Series event to retain their position in the top tier of the 2022-23 USYS National League Sunshine Conference or any other USYS National League Conference.

This National League Showcase Requirement is not applicable to teams participating in National League P.R.O. for the 2022-23 seasonal year.

SECTION 2. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATION

2.01 Structure

The 2022-23 US Youth Soccer National League Sunshine Conference will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2010 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2009 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2008 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2006 or later
- 18 and Under (18U) – for players born on January 1, 2005 or later
- 19 and Under (19U) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later

Within the Sunshine Conference there will be a single tier of competition, Premier I, which includes up to 14 teams in each gender age group from the State Associations of Florida (FYSA).

SECTION 3. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters

The official Team Roster for the Sunshine Conference shall be in GotSport. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their GotSport Sunshine Team Roster (with regards to Primary Players) is identical to their Official State Association Roster. The GotSport roster must be accurate by 24 hours prior to a team's first match of the season. A team's State Association may impose an earlier deadline. Additions to the Team Roster, subject to the requirements of a team's State Association, must be updated in the GotSport roster no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to a Sunshine Conference weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

Sunshine Conference teams may create a Club Pass Roster in GotSport, which is the pool of Club Pass players designated for use by a specific team. Any club pass player must be added to the Club Pass Roster and Match Card no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to a Sunshine Conference weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match. Any club pass player, once added to a team's Club Pass Roster, cannot be removed until the completion of the Conference season.

3.02 Player Eligibility and Limitations

All players must be current US Youth Soccer members and have member passes that have been approved by their respective State Association.

A player in the Sunshine Conference may only play for one (1) team in the Conference Division in which their primary team is participating. For example, if a club has two (2) teams in the Sunshine Conference Premier I Division, primary and club pass players may only play on one (1) of those teams during the Conference season, not both.

A player may play for only one (1) Conference team during any single day. Once a player is on the roster of a team in a Conference Division and such team has played one (1) match in Conference competition, such player may not appear on another team's roster in such Conference Division during the remainder of the Conference season.

During the Conference season, a Goalkeeper may be listed on up to two (2) Conference team match day team lineups per day from the same club, with the written consent by the Conference League Manager. A Goalkeeper may not play on more than one team in the same gender age group of a Conference Division, and is subject to the same standards as club pass players.

3.03 Team Match Day Line-Ups

Up to eighteen (18) players (inclusive of both primary players and club pass players) are eligible to play in each Conference match. Eligible players must be listed on the GotSport Match Card. The GotSport Match Card will be used as the official Team Line-Up prior to each Conference match, and the official Match Report following each Conference match. The process, timing, and verification of the Team Line-Up and Match Card must be done in accordance with Section 9 (Match Day Procedures) of this document.

Players on the team roster who are not eligible/participating in a Conference match are allowed in the team bench area but must not be in uniform.

3.04 Playing of Ineligible Player

In accordance with National League Rules, a team that plays an ineligible player may be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to: (a) forfeiture of the match; and (b) suspension of the team's coach from Conference competition. Additional disciplinary action could include (a) expulsion of the team from the Conference; and/or (b) any further action(s) as determined by the Conference League Manager.

Accusations from teams of an ineligible player must be extensively substantiated and is incumbent on the accuser to provide concrete evidence of ineligibility.

3.05 Player Information

The Sunshine Conference may require participating teams to provide information on players for use in promoting the Conference and/or its teams and players. Upon request, teams are required to submit information regarding personal player history, competition history, roster history, and any other information that may help promote the league, player, or team.

SECTION 4. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – SCHEDULING AND MATCH MANAGEMENT

4.01 Number of Matches

Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of four (4) matches in a season. Most age groups in the Sunshine Conference will play between seven (7) – eleven (11) Premier I matches in a single round-robin format. The final match count will be determined by the number of accepted teams in the Conference.

4.02 Location of Inter-state Matches

The location of inter-state matches will be determined by League Manager, in coordination with the respective hosting State Association.

4.03 Host/Travel/Hotels

For the purpose of Sunshine Conference competition, Notification to Host/Travel Forms are not required. Notification to host/travel is granted when a team's respective State Association confirms the team's application into the Conference.

4.04 Inter-state Match Schedules

The League Manager will have sole discretion in scheduling inter-state matches. The intention of the Conference is to publish the schedule approximately one (1) month prior to the first match weekend. The inter-state schedules will take into account the following situations:

- a) Head Coaches of multiple teams. Every attempt will be made to de-conflict coaches of two (2) teams within the Sunshine Conference. Head coaches of three (3) or more teams cannot be guaranteed. The Head Coach of a team must be accurately listed in GotSport prior to the schedule being published in order to be considered for de-conflicting.
- b) ACT / SAT dates. Should a Conference date fall on a SAT or ACT test date, the older age groups will be scheduled as late in the day as possible (i.e. 2pm or later) so that, at a minimum, a player can take the test in the same area as the inter-state match and participate in their scheduled match.
- c) Distance of Travel. Every attempt will be made so that teams traveling a greater distance will play later on Saturday and earlier on Sunday.

4.07 Match Schedule and Rest Periods

It is the intent of the league to play only one (1) match per day; however, when circumstances dictate, no more than two (2) matches a day may be scheduled. Every effort will be made to provide for a minimum of three (3) hours rest between matches. Most circumstances involving teams playing two (2) matches in a day will be related to rain-out reschedules.

4.08 Inclement Weather and Unplayable Field Conditions Prior to Match

The Host Complex / State Association is responsible for notifying the League Manager as soon as possible if matches on scheduled fields are unable to be played due to field closings or inclement weather. The League Manager, in consultation with the host complex, will make every effort to determine the status of inter-state matches by the Wednesday prior to the inter-state weekend of play (Saturday and Sunday). Rescheduling of inter-state matches is done in accordance with Conference Rescheduling Policy.

4.09 Rescheduling Policy

Once the Sunshine Conference schedule is published it shall be considered official. Changes are permitted at the discretion of the League Manager due to transcription errors, inaccurate information provided to the Sunshine Conference or other errors as determined by the League Manager. All other changes to the schedule shall be made in accordance with the below parameters. Any reschedule situation not included here-in will be determined at the sole discretion of the League Manager.

- (a) Should a team have a conflict with a National League P.R.O. event (national tier), their conflicting Sunshine Conference match will be rescheduled by the League Manager.
- (b) Should the hosting complex change fields numbers or field availability prior to an inter-state event weekend, the League Manager will update the schedule as necessary. Every attempt will be made to have as little impact on the schedule as possible, however, some match start times may have to be updated.
- (c) Should an inter-state match or matches be cancelled due to rain or inclement weather, it shall be rescheduled on a date/time/location as determined by the League Manager. Following a rain-out, the rescheduled match shall be published no later than ten (10) days after the originally scheduled match. The rescheduled match may be scheduled as the second match on a day when both teams are at the same Conference event. Once the reschedule is published, it shall be considered official.
- (d) In situations where multiple inter-state matches are being played an event weekend, and matches are postponed during the first day of competition (i.e. Saturday), the postponed match is to be scheduled for the following day (i.e. Sunday) if possible with such determination made solely by the League Manager. The League Manager may determine to shorten match lengths of any scheduled or rescheduled match in order to play as many postponed matches as possible.
- (e) Requests to reschedule an inter-state match due to a team, player(s), or coach conflict will not be considered unless there are extraordinary circumstances as determined by the League Manager. Most reschedule requests due to travel, time preference, or player/coach availability will not be considered. In the rare case of granting a reschedule request, the requesting team will be invoiced for any non-refundable expenses related to the scheduling of the match at its original date, time and location.
- (f) Intra-state matches that are cancelled due to rain or inclement weather will be rescheduled with the approval of the teams' respective State Association.
- (g) Intra-state matches may be rescheduled with approval by the respective State Association.

4.10 Referee Jurisdiction

Once the referee has jurisdiction of a match, the match may be stopped, suspended, or terminated as provided in the "IFAB Laws of the Game."

4.11 Emergency Match Management Procedures

On an emergency basis, the League Manager reserves the right to impose emergency Match Management Procedures. These procedures shall be limited to those items that are necessary, in the sole opinion of the League Manager, in order for a match to be played. Such procedures could include, but are not limited to, the following.

- (a) Shortening match lengths or half time due to inclement weather, lack of light, or other extraordinary circumstances.
- (b) Moving a match to earlier or later in a day.
- (c) Establishing additional match day(s) due to excessive rain-outs.
- (d) Approving the use of less than a 3-man referee crew or approving use of a “club” linesman.
- (e) Approving an alternate method to validate eligible players.

SECTION 5. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – STANDINGS

5.01 Earning Points in Matches

Points earned in the Sunshine Conference will be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. The standings of teams within the Sunshine Conference will be based upon the number of points earned from each match. Teams earn points as follows: 3 points for a win; 1 point for a tie; and no points for a loss.

5.02 Forfeits

A forfeited match will be scored as a 1-0 win for the opponent. A team forfeiting any match shall be dropped from the Sunshine Conference at the discretion of the League Manager following a review of the incident resulting in any Forfeits. Should a team be dropped, all scores for that team in the seasonal year schedule shall be recorded as a 1-0 win for the opponent. In addition, a team that forfeits one of more matches may be subject to further sanctioning including but not limited to a fine, become ineligible to advance to Regionals, become ineligible to advance to the National Tier of the National League, or be suspended from the National League. The League Manager of the Sunshine Conference, after consultation of the NL Management Group, shall determine any additional sanctioning.

SECTION 6. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – NATIONAL/REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

6.01 Advancement to US Youth Soccer Southern Regional Championships

The top team in the Premier I tier of each 13U-19U gender age group in the Sunshine Conference will qualify for 2023 Southern Regional Championships that same seasonal year as the Sunshine Conference representative. To be eligible for advancement to the 2023 Southern Regional Championships, the qualified Sunshine Conference team must have participated in their state association’s State Cup competition. Should a team qualify for the Southern Regional Championships through both the Sunshine Conference and State Cup competition, the team will advance to Southern Regional Championships as the Sunshine Conference representative.

6.02 Qualification into National League P.R.O.

The top 2 teams in each 13U-18U gender age group, by points/tiebreakers, from the Premier I tier of the Sunshine Conference shall receive an automatic invitation into National League P.R.O. (National tier) the next seasonal year in the team’s rising gender age group. All automatic qualifying and open slots are subject to the approval of the National League Management Group.

SECTION 7. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – RULES OF PLAY

7.01 Applicable Rules and Laws of the Game

Matches will be played under the applicable policies and rules of National League and US Youth Soccer. Teams are responsible for obtaining and abiding by the IFAB Laws of the Game as they govern play subject to the modifications noted in the National League Conference Rules.

7.02 Substitutions

Matches in the 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U age groups will operate under the FIFA-7 players “per half” substitution system (limited substitution). Once replaced, players cannot re-enter the game during that half of play. Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play with the approval of the referee. If a player is removed

from the match and no substitute enters the match for the player (team plays short), the original player may re-enter the match. Re-entry shall be at a normal substitution point (with approval of the referee) or at any point during the match if the referee signals for the player's re-entry. Matches in the 13U and 14U age groups shall have unlimited substitutions.

During a match is that is part of a Conference event using neutral Health Care Professionals (HCP) or neutral Athletic Trainer Certified (ATC) to monitor the fields, if a player is suspected of suffering a head injury, such player may be substituted for evaluation. The substitution for the evaluation of a concussion/head injury will not count towards the team's total allowed substitutions in a half. However, the team must have at least one substitution available to implement this temporary substitution.

If the player is deemed by the neutral HCP or neutral ATC to not have been diagnosed as having a possible concussion, the player may re-enter the game at any stoppage of play and must replace the original substitute. This head injury evaluation substitution will not count as a used substitution in the half. Furthermore, the temporary substitute will be able to re-enter the game in that half at a later time. If the player is not cleared to return to play by the HCP or ATC, the replacement player will no longer be considered a temporary substitute and the team will be charged a substitution.

7.03 Match Length

Each Conference match length will be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. The League Manager will have discretion to shorten match lengths in cases of extraordinary circumstances.

7.04 Team Uniforms

Team Uniforms must be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. Every team in the Sunshine Conference must have two (2) sets of jerseys and socks. The expectation is for the team listed first in the schedule to wear their lighter/white colored jersey and socks, while the team listed second in the schedule to wear their darker colored jersey and socks. If, in the opinion of the Referee, a team color conflict exists, the team listed second in the schedule should change.

Every player on the field must have a unique number (from the rest of the team) affixed on the back of their jersey, with the exception of goalkeepers. Goalkeeper jersey numbers are optional, but if a number is affixed, it must be a unique number (from the rest of the team). Taped numbers will not be allowed.

US Youth Soccer, National League, or other US Youth Soccer related logos/patches are allowed on uniforms, in addition to the team name, team sponsor, or shirt manufacturer. No other patches/logos are permitted without the written approval of the League Manager.

7.05 Sunshine Conference Protocol for Send Offs and Dismissals

Protocols for send offs and dismissals shall be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. In the Sunshine Conference, should a player be sent off from a Conference match, the designated area for the ejected player shall be the Team Bench Area and will remain there under the supervision of the player's Coach. If the sent off player cannot be controlled by the Coach, the Referee may require the removal of the player from the entire field area. If such player is removed from the field area, the Coach must designate a parent or Team Official to supervise the player away from the field area.

7.06 Team Coaches – Coaching Education Requirement

Coaches of teams within the Sunshine Conference should have obtained a US Soccer National D License or the United Soccer Coaches equivalent (National Diploma) level of coaching education. All coaches and team officials in the Team Bench Area must have proper credentials issued by their State Association.

SECTION 8. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – REFEREES

8.01 Three Person System

Matches shall be officiated in accordance with National League Rules. The League Manager may, in extreme circumstances, approve exceptions to the use of the three-person system.

8.02 Referee Assignor

The hosting State Association will determine which referee assignor will assign each event hosted in their State Association boundaries. Referee assignors must be a certified US Soccer assignor. The referee assignor shall be paid by the hosting State Association, unless otherwise approved by the League Manager.

8.03 Payment of Referees

Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid according to the policies of the hosting State Association. The pay rate shall be established by Florida Youth Soccer Association (FYSA).

8.04 Filing of Referee Match Report

Prior to each Conference match, each team shall present a GotSport "Match Card" to the Referee, which shall serve as the Official Team Line-Up prior to the game and the official Match Report following the completion of the game. The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and use it to check-in the players from both teams. The selected Match Card will become the official Match Report.

Following the completion of each Conference Match, the Referee shall accurately report all scores and cards issued onto the selected Match Card (now the official Match Report). Once the scores and cards issued are written on the Match Report, it should be presented to both coaches for their signature. Each team must take a picture of the final Match Report for their own records. The Referee shall then submit the Match Report to the on-site Conference Official or referee assignor. In cases of "one off" games (typically self-schedule matches), the Referee shall submit the Match Report to the HOME TEAM, who will in turn submit to the League Manager and submit to GotSport.

If a player is sent off for Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Abusive Language, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site Conference Official or referee assignor with the Match Report. Additionally, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site Conference Official or referee assignor for situations involving Referee Abuse or Referee Assault. The on-site Conference Official or referee assignor shall submit all Match Reports and US Soccer Supplemental Reports to the League Manager.

SECTION 9. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – MATCH DAY PROCEDURES

9.01 Match Day Procedures

The Sunshine Conference Match Day Procedures apply to all matches played in the Sunshine Conference, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager.

9.02 Team Line-Up

The GotSport generated Match Card shall be the official Team Line-Up for the Sunshine Conference. The Match Card for each Conference match should be printed no earlier than 24 hours prior to the scheduled start of that match. This timing will ensure the most accurate information for each Team Line-Up. The eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and club pass players) should be listed on the Match Card no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to a Sunshine Conference weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

9.03 Team Line-Up - Players

The Match Card must include the eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and club pass players) a team will use in a Sunshine Conference match. Should more than eighteen (18) players appear on the card, the Coach or Team Official must manually strike through the players that will not participate (prior to check-in by the referee) for a maximum of eighteen (18) eligible players.

9.04 Club Pass Roster

Any Club Pass Players must be listed on the Club Pass Roster (i.e. pool of club pass players) and Match Day Line-Up Card to be eligible to participate. A Primary or Club Pass Player may only appear on one (1) Sunshine Conference Primary Roster/Club Pass Roster in a gender age group during the Conference season. The maximum Club Pass Roster for a Sunshine Conference team is 30 minus the number of primary rostered players (i.e. a team with 18 rostered players has a Club Pass Roster maximum of 12).

9.05 Team/Player Check-In

Prior to the start of a Conference match, each team shall present the referee with the copy of the Match Card and their properly prepared US Youth Soccer Player Passes.

The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and check-in each team's players using both the Match Card and the US Youth Soccer Player Passes. Only a maximum of eighteen (18) players may be checked in for a Conference match. Any player not present at the time of check-in may not enter the field of play until the Referee can properly check-in the player. The League Manager may designate an on-site Conference Official to perform any required check-in.

9.06 Team Bench / Spectator Areas

The teams will occupy the same side of the field. Teams are to remain on their half of the field between the halfway line and eighteen yards from their goal line. Spectators are to only occupy the opposite side of the field from the teams on the same end of the field as their team bench area. Coaches/Managers are required to maintain control of their players and their team's fans on the sideline.

9.07 Post-Match Protocol

Following the conclusion of the game, the Referee shall fill out the official Match Report, which is the selected Match Card used for player check-in. The Coach or Team Official from each team is required to sign the completed Match Report prior to leaving the field area. Each team must take a picture of the Match Report for their records.

The signed Match Report will be kept by the Referee and submitted to the Referee Assignor or Conference official. In some cases, primarily involving self-schedule matches, the League Manager may adjust how the Match Report is submitted to the Conference.

9.08 Reporting of Scores and Red Cards (GotSport)

Both teams are responsible for promptly and accurately reporting the score of their match in GotSport, in addition to reporting any red cards issued. Teams must take a picture of the completed Match Report so they can upload it into GotSport immediately following the match. The reporting of a particular match score and any red cards issued needs to be done within one (1) hour of the completed match.

- (a) Information needed to report a match result in GotSport: The Team Official must have their GotSport Account login information and their GotSport Account must be affiliated with the team they are reporting the score for.
- (b) To report a match result in GotSport: Log into your GotSport Account, navigate to the "Team Management" menu and select "Matches" on the left. You can then filter for the correct match as needed. Select the *** icon to the right of the match and choose the "Match Stats" option. Enter the Score and any red cards issued in the resulting pop-up. Click Save. For a complete Walkthrough Guide with visual [Click Here](#).

9.09 Submission of Best XI Nominations (GotSport)

- (c) Both teams who compete in a Sunshine Conference match are responsible for promptly submitting their Best XI nomination from that match in GotSport. During the submission of a nomination, PLEASE NOTE that teams vote for players on the OPPOSING TEAM. Teams need to take a picture of the completed Match Report for their records and to assist the Team Official with accurate player information. The nomination submission for Best XI should be done within one (1) hour of the completed match. Best XI nominations are submitted in GotSport at the same time a score is recorded. See 9.08 for an overview of score reporting. [Click Here](#) for a complete Walkthrough Guide regarding Best XI submissions.

9.10 Protests

Protests must be made in accordance with US Youth Soccer National League Conference Rules, Section 20. To be valid and eligible for consideration, a protest must be noted on the Match Report and orally lodged by a team official with the match referee and the opposing coach at the match site before leaving the field of play. All protests must be submitted in writing and filed by the Director of the Club or the Director of Coaching of the Club that the team is a member with the appropriate fee to the Conference League Manager. The protest must be postmarked no later than three (3) business days after match completion in accordance with the Filing Procedures listed in National League Rule 20.06. The referee is the final authority on the field of play. All decisions of the referees with respect to matters of fact, including judgment matters, are final.

9.11 Final Authority

The League Manager shall have final authority to act in the best interest of the Sunshine Conference, which may include but not limited to adjusting Match Day Procedures for specific matches or making decisions to address situations not covered in the Sunshine Conference Operating Procedures.