



US YOUTH SOCCER FRONTIER DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE OPERATING PROCEDURES

(as of August 31, 2022)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the US Youth Soccer National League Conference Rules (10.06) these Frontier Development League (FDL) 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 Frontier Development League (FDL).

The FDL shall have a Technical Group made of the League Manager, one (1) representative from each eligible club, and one (1) representative from each state association where eligible clubs are registered. The Technical Group will, on a yearly basis, adopt and approve the Operating Procedures of the league and will establish criteria for membership. The Technical Group of the FDL will have the authority in all league matters as long as the decisions do not conflict with the US Youth Soccer National League Conference Rules. The Technical Group of the 2021-22 FDL is as follows.

Chairman – League Manager
Voting Member – D’Feeters/Kicks SC (NTX)
Voting Member – Dash Youth (STX)
Voting Member – FC Dallas Youth (NTX)
Voting Member – Lonestar SC (STX)
Voting Member – Solar SC (NTX)
Voting Member – North Texas State Soccer Association
Voting Member – South Texas Youth Soccer Association

SECTION 1. FDL – ELIGIBILITY / APPLICATION

1.01 Club / Team Eligibility

To be eligible for FDL, a club must be within the boundaries of the US Youth Soccer Frontier Conference (North Texas, South Texas, and Oklahoma) and accepted for participation by the Technical Group. A team from a club applying for entry into the FDL must meet the eligibility requirements in accordance with the National League Conference Rules. To be accepted into the FDL, an applying club must receive a 2/3 majority vote in favor of acceptance from the FDL Technical Group.

1.02 Registration System / Application Process

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

Eligible teams must have a GotSport account in order to apply into the FDL. Team accounts must have accurate information regarding the coach and manager at the time of submission. In completing any application into the FDL, teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments.

1.03 Application Deadlines

The new club application deadline is May 1 for the upcoming seasonal year, or as otherwise approved by the League Manager.

1.04 Application Agreement

Any team applying to play in a FDL 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 Frontier Conference for participation in the FDL by the applicable deadlines.

1.05 State Association Registration

All eligible teams must be properly registered in their respective member State Association prior to acceptance into the FDL.

1.06 Fees and Other Expenses

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the FDL is \$950 per team and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the FDL and later drops out. Team Entry Fees are payable to US Youth Soccer. The Team Entry Fee does not include fees for referees, fields, medical, or other hosting costs. The "Home" club will be responsible for all operational expenses related to the hosting "Home" matches.

SECTION 2. FDL – LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATION

2.01 Structure

The FDL will include the following 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
- 18/19 and Under (19U) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later

Within the FDL there will be a single tier of competition. Teams will play a double round-robin within each age group.

2.02 Determination of Format

Each team will be expected to compete in home and away matches against each of the teams in the FDL. The FDL schedule is managed by each member club.

2.03 Qualification

Each eligible club may submit up to two (2) teams in each age group of the FDL. The club will determine the formation of each eligible team.

SECTION 3. FDL – TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters

The official Team Roster for FDL shall be in GotSport. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their GotSport FDL 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 FDL weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

FDL 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 FDL 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 FDL 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 an age group of FDL, 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 FDL match. Eligible players must be listed on the Team Match Day Line-Up (i.e GotSport Game Card). The GotSport Game Card will be the used as the official Team Match Day Line-Up prior to each FDL match, and the official Match Report following each FDL match. The process, timing, and verification of the Team Match Day Line-Up 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 Conference 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 FDL competition. Additional disciplinary action could include (a) expulsion of the team from the FDL; and/or (b) any further action(s) as determined by the 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 FDL may require participating teams to provide information on players for use in promoting the FDL 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. FDL – SCHEDULING AND MATCH MANAGEMENT

4.01 Number of Matches

The number of FDL matches will be determined by the number of teams in each age group. Each team will play a double round-robin in their age group. It is the intent of the FDL to play only one (1) match per day.

4.02 Location of Matches

The location of FDL matches will be determined by the hosting club.

4.03 Match Schedules

The clubs will have sole discretion in scheduling their home matches. In order to ensure consistency of match scheduling, each club shall follow the below standards:

- a) Clubs should work together to set a final schedule of games.
- b) No matches shall be scheduled prior to 9:00 AM unless the visiting club agrees.
- c) All matches must be scheduled to end at least 30 minutes prior to sunset, unless lights are provided and the visiting club agrees to later start times.

- d) All clubs are expected to schedule matches with professionalism and good will, meaning to not place any club at a competitive advantage or disadvantage.
- e) All matches played on the same day are expected to be played at the same facility, unless the visiting club agrees to multiple facilities being utilized.

4.04 Host Club Communication

The host club is required to provide the visiting club with all match day details at least five (5) days prior to scheduled match. Match day details should include facility address, directions, weather forecast, fixture schedule, field numbers, etc. If there are weather related concerns, the hosting club shall address the situation and accurately communicate schedule changes (if necessary). Each club is responsible for communicating with the teams from their own club.

4.05 Facilities

The host club is responsible for providing high quality fields for FDL matches. Turf or natural grass surfaces are both acceptable. Each FDL facility must have permanent or portable restrooms on site and available to players and spectators.

Match fields for FDL should be setup as follows:

- a) Team sideline requires both the home and away team have an adequate number of benches.
- b) Team sideline requires both the home and away team have matching team tents.
- c) Team sideline requires a minimum of one (1) trashcan.
- d) Team sideline requires a minimum of one (1) table providing water and/or sports drink.
- e) All match fields must be marked and sized properly in accordance with US Youth Soccer specifications.
- f) All match fields must have four (4) matching corner flags.
- g) Three (3) match balls must be provided at by the host club.

4.06 Medical Coverage

The host club is responsible for providing an athletic trainer that will be on site while FDL matches are being played. The athletic trainer should arrive approximately one (1) hour prior to the start of the first match and continue until the end of the final match. The host club is responsible for payment of the athletic trainer.

4.07 Referees

Each FDL club is expected to seek the best referees in their geographic area. A minimum of a "State" licensed referee is recommended as the center referee for FDL matches. It is the responsibility of the host club to collaborate with their certified U.S. Soccer referee assignor for match assignments as well as handle payment of those referees. 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."

4.08 Rescheduling Policy

Once the FDL schedule is published it shall be considered official. Changes are permitted at the discretion of the League Manager in consultation with the clubs involved. Other changes to the schedule shall be made in accordance with the below guidelines. 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 event (Conference, P.R.O. or Showcase), their conflicting FDL match should be rescheduled.
- (b) Should the hosting complex change fields numbers or field availability prior to an inter-state event weekend, the hosting club 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 a hosting complex close their fields to inclement weather, the host club may, with approval by the League Manager, move the matches to a different facility.
- (d) Should a match or matches be cancelled due to rain or inclement weather, it shall be rescheduled on a date/time/location as determined by the host club with approval by the visiting club and League Manager. Following a rain-out, the rescheduled match shall be published no later than ten (10) days after the originally scheduled match. Once the reschedule is published, it shall be considered official.
- (e) Requests to reschedule a match will not be considered unless both clubs agree to the change with approval by the League Manager.

4.09 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. FDL – STANDINGS

5.01 Earning Points in Matches

Points earned in the FDL will be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. The standings of teams within the FDL 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 FDL 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 National League P.R.O., or be suspended from FDL or the Conference. The League Manager, after consultation with the NL Management Group, shall determine any additional sanctioning.

SECTION 6. FDL – NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

6.01 Advancement to US Youth Soccer Southern Regional Championships

The top team of each 13U-17U and 19U gender age group in FDL will qualify for Southern Regional Championships that same seasonal year as the FDL representative. To be eligible for advancement to the Southern Regional Championships, the qualified FDL team must have participated in their state association’s State Cup competition. Should a team qualify for the Southern Regional Championships through both the FDL and State Cup competition, the team will advance to Southern Regional Championships as the FDL representative.

6.02 Qualification into National League P.R.O.

The top 2 teams in each 13U-17U gender age group, by points/tiebreakers, from FDL shall receive an automatic invitation into the 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. FDL – RULES OF PLAY

7.01 Applicable Rules and Laws of the Game

Matches will be played under the applicable policies and rules of the 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

15U-19U FDL matches 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. If a player is removed from the match and no substitute enters the match for the player (team plays short), the original player may reenter the match at any point during the match if the referee signals for the player’s reentry. The 13U and 14U age groups will operate 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 FDL 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 Rules. Every team in the FDL must have two (2) sets of jerseys and socks. The expectation is for the Home Team (host club) to wear their lighter/white colored jersey and socks, while the Visiting Team (visiting club) to wear their darker colored jersey and socks. If, in the opinion of the Referee, a team color conflict exists, the Visiting Team 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 FDL Protocol for Send Offs and Dismissals

Protocols for send offs and dismissals shall be in accordance with National League Conference Rules. Should a player be sent off from a FDL 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

Coaches of teams within FDL 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. FDL – REFEREES

8.01 Three Person System

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

8.02 Referee Assignor

The hosting club will determine which referee assignor will assign each event hosted by their club. Referee assignors must be a certified U.S. Soccer assignor. The referee assignor shall be paid by the hosting club.

8.03 Payment of Referees

Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid by the hosting club, unless otherwise agreed to by both clubs.

8.04 Filing of Referee Match Report

Prior to each FDL match, the host (home) team shall present a GotSport "Match Card" to the Referee, which shall serve as the Official Match Day Line-Up Card prior to the game and the official Match Report following the completion of the game.

Following the completion of each FDL match, the Referee shall accurately report all scores and cards issued onto the selected Match Report. Once the scores and cards issued are written on the Match Report, it should be presented to both coaches for their signature. It is recommended that each team take a picture of the final Match Report for their own records. The Referee shall then submit the Match Report to host club or referee assignor, who will in turn submit to the League Manager.

If a player is sent off for Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Abusive Language, a U.S. Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the referee assignor with the Match Report. Additionally, a U.S. Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the referee assignor for situations involving Referee Abuse or Referee Assault. The referee assignor or host club shall submit all reports to the League Manager.

SECTION 9. FDL – MATCH DAY PROCEDURES

9.01 Match Day Procedures

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

9.02 Team Match Day Line-Up Card

The GotSport generated Match Card shall be the official Team Line-Up for FDL. 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 FDL weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

9.03 Match Day Line-Up Players

The Team Match Day Line-Up Card must include the eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and club pass players) a team will use in a FDL match. Should more than eighteen 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 and Match Day Line-Up Card to be eligible to participate. A Primary or Club Pass Player may only appear on one (1) FDL Primary Roster/Club Pass Roster in an age group during the Conference season. The maximum Club Pass Roster for a FDL 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 FDL match, the home team shall present the referee with the copy of the Team Match Day Line-Up Card (GotSport Match Card). In addition, each team shall present their properly prepared US Youth Soccer Player Passes to the referee. GotSport electronic player passes that are properly prepared shall be allowed for FDL matches.

The Referee shall check-in each team's players using both the Match Day Line-Up Card and the US Youth Soccer Player Passes. Only a maximum of eighteen (18) players may be checked in for a FDL 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.

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 Protests

Protests must be made in accordance with the National League Conference Rules, Section 20. To be valid and eligible for consideration, a protest must be orally lodged by a team official with the match referee and the opposing coach at the game 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 Conference 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.

9.10 Final Authority

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