

US YOUTH SOCCER

2023-24 North Atlantic CONFERENCE OPERATING PROCEDURES

(as of January, 2024)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the US Youth Soccer Rules (14.06 Conference Operating Procedures) these North Atlantic Conference Operating Procedures shall be an extension of the Rules. When Rules are referenced or summarized in these Operating Procedures, they are meant to mirror the Rules in every respect. These Operating Procedures are specific to the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference.

SECTION 1. NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – TEAM INFORMATION

1.01 Commitment

Any team looking to participate in the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference must understand the level of commitment it takes to participate in a League that stretches across multiple different state associations. All teams understand that this is a multi-state league and that teams may travel hundreds of miles to participate in conference games. Teams understand that they may not play any true “home” games. A limited number of teams are accepted into the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference, so it is important that each team makes the commitment to travel BEFORE applying to the conference.

1.02 Boys and Girls Age Groups of Competition

The 2023-24 US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2011 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2010 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2009 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2008 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later
- 18 and Under (18U) – for players born on January 1, 2006 or later
- 19 and Under (19U) – for players born on January 1, 2005 or later

1.03 Entry Fee

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference is **\$895** per team at 13U-14U and **\$725** at 15U-19U, per year (paid to EDP Soccer through your GotSport account at the time of application) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the conference and later drops out. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with the Conference Operating Procedures. Team Fees are paid directly to EDP Soccer through your GotSport account or mailed in by check. Payment details will be listed at the time of application. Teams may also be required to pay additional event fees for conference hosted events, which can be seen later in this document.

1.04 Conference Boundaries

US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference boundaries are for youth teams that are members of US Youth Soccer State Associations of Eastern New York, Connecticut and New York West, although teams from outside these areas may also apply to participate.

1.05 Seasons of Play

a) 2023 FALL SEASON

Boys and Girls 13U-14U competitions. The 13U-14U competition during the 2023 Fall Season will feature Premier I, and Premier II tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the Premier Division tiers to determine the 2023 Spring Season placement of teams into tiers.

b) 2024 SPRING SEASON

Boys and Girls 13U and 14U competitions. The 13U-14U competition during the 2024 Season will feature Premier I and Premier II Division tiers of play (primarily based on the results of the 2023 Fall Season of play) with promotion and relegation between the tiers for the following soccer year.

Boys and Girls 15U through 19U competitions. Due to avoiding conflicts with high school soccer, the North Atlantic Conference will offer its 15U through 19U competition during the 2024 Spring Season. Boy's and Girls competitions in these age groups during the 2024 Spring Season will feature Premier I and Premier II tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the Premier Division tiers for the following soccer year.

1.06 Application Procedures

a) The team application period to participate in the 2023 Fall Season 13U and 14U (boys and girls) and Developmental 15U (boys and girls) will **open on or around May 1, 2023, and close on July 1, 2023.**

b) The team application period to participate in the 2024 Spring Season 15U through 19U (Boys and Girls) age groups will **open on or around September 1, 2023, and close on December 1, 2023.**

The team application period to participate in the 2024 Spring Season 13U and 14U (Boys and Girls) age groups will **open on or around November 1, 2023, and close on January 13, 2024.**

This application will be available on the conference website on the day the application period opens. Following your application, US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference will send your team information to the State Association where your team resides, allowing them to review and endorse the application. For clarification the State Association endorsement refers to a team being correctly registered and in good standing with their State Association.

After the State Association endorsement, the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference Selection Group will review team applications and determine acceptance into the conference. In completing any application into the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic 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.

1.07 Selection and Placement

The US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference two-step acceptance process consists of the following -

1. Each team must be correctly registered and in good standing with their respective state association.
2. The US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference selection group shall review and make determination on the final selection of all teams.

Accepted teams shall be notified via a website posting or e-mail regarding their acceptance and placement into the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference. Premier I and Premier II level slots earned under the 2022-23 North Atlantic Conference season will be honored within a team's respective Conference in 2023-24.

Teams wishing to be considered for the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference that are or have been participating in leagues sanctioned outside the US Youth Soccer associated member affiliate leagues (leagues sanctioned by other governing bodies) shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for suitable introduction to the conference at the discretion of the selection group and the league manager.

After the team application window is closed for an upcoming season, proposed team name changes must be communicated to the league manager. Acceptance of any name change will be dependent and based on the team and its associated roster meeting the acceptance criteria, only then will that name change be granted. If that team does not meet the acceptance criteria, then such a team may be removed from the Conference.

All decisions are at the discretion of the Conference Manager, in communication with the League Management Group.

1.08 Referees

US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference games will use a three-man referee system. Each team is responsible for one-half of the total referee fees per game and payment is to be made in cash prior to each game as follows:

13U and 14U: \$90 per game per team; a total of \$180 (\$90 to Referee and \$45 to each AR)

15U and 16U: \$100 per game per team; a total of \$200 (\$100 to Referee and \$50 to each AR)

17U, 18U and 19U: \$110 per game per team; a total of \$220 (\$110 to Referee and \$55 to each AR)

The League is responsible for contacting the relevant referee assignor to ensure match officials are present for their games. The Assignor is listed as the "Host" on the schedule, and the League takes on the responsibility for communicating schedule changes.

1.09 Team Rosters

Teams may utilize 30 players during a season in accordance with League Rules and Policies. A maximum 22-player Team Roster with additional use of a Club Pass Roster shall be utilized in all age groups. Club Pass players may only come from within a team's club, provided that the player is a US Youth Soccer member. All rosters shall be submitted to the league through the GotSport platform.

1.10 Rules and Information

a) Substitution

- Matches in the 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U Premier I and II age groups will operate under the FIFA-7 players "per half" substitution system. Once replaced, players cannot re-enter the game during that half of play.
- Unlimited vs Limited substitution policies in Premier I shall be aligned with the National Championship Series Policy and shall be outlined in the Individual COPs.
- Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play with the approval of the referee.
- Reentry shall be at a normal substitution point (with approval of the referee) or at any point during the game if the referee signals for the player's reentry.

- 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.
 - Any discipline issued to the temporary substitute will count for the remainder of the game.

- b) Rules and additional information on the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference may be found on the North Atlantic Conference website a <https://www.usysnationalleague.com/north-atlantic-conference/>

1.11 Coaching Education Requirement

Coaches of teams within the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference must achieve a level of coaching education in accordance with the Conference Operating Procedures where all coaches within the team bench area during a game must have a minimum of a US Soccer Grassroots Coaching License. If you have coaches on the coaching education pathway, this requirement may be waived only upon a written request to the League Manager with documentation showing the coaching education pathway taken by the coach.

1.12 Permission to Travel

Teams are not required to complete permission to travel permits/forms for games played outside of their State Association as permission is automatically granted by State Association approval of the team for US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference play.

1.13 Competition Format

All competitions in every age group shall be round robin. There may be end of season playoffs pending the number of divisions at the Premier I tier. Based on the number of teams placed into subdivisions, teams may play a minimum of five games and up to a total of ten US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference games during the season. Please be aware of the number of games that teams will be required to play. US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference teams are required to fulfill their commitment by playing out their entire conference schedule of games.

1.14 Advancement to Regionals

The top one (1) team (non-state cup champion) from each age group and gender of the USYS North Atlantic Conference may qualify for 2024 Eastern Regional Championships in the same seasonal year as the USYS North Atlantic Conference. Specific allocations will be designated early in the spring season.

To remain qualified for Regionals, a team must also play in their state association's State Cup competition. Please note that 13U and 14U Regional qualifiers come from the spring season standings, not the fall season. Any team that achieves an automatic qualification slot to Regionals from the conference is expected to honor the commitment to participate in the Eastern Regional Competition. Failure to field a team in such Regional Competition may result in a \$500 league fine.

1.15 Qualification into 2024-25 National League Conference Playoffs

Teams placed in the top tier of the Conference in Premier I will have opportunities to automatically qualify and compete within a national platform through National League Conference Playoffs for the 2024-25 season. All automatic qualifiers come from the National League Conferences based on teams' performances in the 2023-24 season. An application process will then be used to select teams to fill in any open slots. Additional information can be found [HERE](#). For any other questions that can't be found on the National League Conference Playoffs website, please contact nationalleague@usyouthsoccer.org.

1.16 National League Showcase Series Requirement

We have removed the former mandate for the national showcases. These national events have now been replaced with Regional Showcase events. These Showcase events will be Showcase format only, these are not league weekends. These are additional, optional events that will be by application only (additional fees will apply). These will be primarily for National League teams, but they are open events and teams from outside of the league may apply. These events will be heavily marketed to college coaches. These events are two-day or three-day events.

1.17 Location of Games

The league will operate with **One-Off Hosting Games**. A team hosts a one-off game between itself and another team from within its division. Host bears all costs for hosting or if teams agree at the time of scheduling, the teams may share costs (usually for games played at a neutral location). Split costs must be agreed at the time of scheduling.

1.18 Must Be Available to Play Weekends

Teams are only excused from USYS North Atlantic Conference on scheduled weekends due to state cup conflicts. However, it is the responsibility of teams, affected by their inability to play on Must Be Available to Play Weekends, to be flexible in being able to schedule USYS North Atlantic Conference games on other weekends during the Season. A team's requirement to be available to play on these USYS North Atlantic Conference weekends ceases once the division schedule is agreed to by the teams. The purpose of the Must Be Available to Play Weekends is to ensure common play dates. USYS North Atlantic Conference allows flexibility in scheduling providing all teams in a division agree to scheduling flexibility.

1.19 League Fines

Any team that is subject to a league fine/s must pay such fine/s immediately upon notification from League officials. You will receive written email notification from the League of such fines. Any team failing to pay fines imposed on their team may result in such team being suspended from the conference for subsequent years. Any club with a team that is suspended shall receive a warning to their club. If repeated team fines are not paid from said club, the warned club may have all teams suspended from the League for subsequent years. All league fines once issued can be paid through your team GotSport account. Additional late fees will be added if fine invoices are not paid by the due date. Due dates will be provided when the fine is invoiced through GotSport.

SECTION 2. NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – SCHEDULING INFORMATION

2.01 Scheduling Policy

- a) Upon receiving the posted schedules, teams are expected to promptly make arrangements for their scheduled games. All communication should be done via the GotSport Chat.
- b) All game dates must be confirmed prior to the scheduled lock dates.
- c) Teams should contact opponents promptly if there will be a request to change the game day or game week. If there is mutual consent before the schedule is locked, the game must be updated in GotSport by the home team.
- d) Host teams should confirm the date of the game, provide the time and place of the game and any travel directions as soon as possible, but at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled game.
- e) Both scheduled clubs have an obligation to be proactive in the scheduling process. If a host team is not contacting the visiting team within a reasonable time with game details, or either team is not responding to attempts to contact the team, the EDP Coordinator should be advised promptly.
- f) The Default Day for games is Sunday.
 - a. Pre-approved clubs may use Saturday as their default day for Home Games.
- g) Teams playing an opponent in multiple competitions may have the result of the game played appear as the result in such additional competitions. Both teams must agree to use such results for multiple competitions in advance, and must memorialize such agreement in writing, copying the league on such notification.
- h) Modifications must receive consent from both teams, and be submitted to the league in writing or such other format as required by the league. In the event that both teams are unable to agree on a modification, the league will make a final determination.
- i) 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 rescheduled or travel considerations.

2.02 Deadline to Play Matches

Premier I league games must be completed by May 24th to count toward advancement opportunities. Premier II games may be played through June 2nd. The league may authorize games to be played after the listed date. All authorizations must be in writing.

2.03 Games Lock Date

All Games will be locked on March 22nd. Once games are locked, games cannot be changed without league approval.

2.03 Cancellations

Cancellations within the 7-day window may require full payment for referee fees and facility fees, up to \$200 and proof of payment must be submitted. Notification of cancellations need to be sent to the EDP League staff at league@edpsoccer.com

2.04 Reschedule Policies

No game may be rescheduled after the schedule lock date without submitting a game change request and receiving approval from the league. A game may be changed if it falls on the same day as a league-accepted priority competition for conflict purposes. Such competitions will be acknowledged prior to the start of the season. If the host team's fields are unplayable or unavailable for any reason other than the weather, and the listed visiting team has fields available for the game date and time, teams may switch the fixture (home team becomes the away team; away team becomes the home team) with the mutual consent of both teams.

SECTION 3. NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – TEAM ROSTER & PLAYER GUIDE

3.01 General

All players must be current US Youth Soccer members and have member passes that have been approved by their respective State Association. During a season (Fall or Spring) a primary player may only be listed on one Team Roster. Players listed as primary on a Team Roster may also be listed as a club pass player on team roster(s) within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated club as approved by the team's State Association, in accordance with Conference Rules and Policy. A player that is rostered to a team outside of the Conference but within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated club as approved by the team's State Association, may also be listed as a club pass player on team roster(s) within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated club. In situations where a player may be listed as a Primary or Secondary player, such player may only be on a roster for a team within the player's Primary Club.

3.02 Roster Size

The maximum roster size on a Team's Primary Roster is 22. The minimum roster size on a Team's Primary Roster is 8. (This excludes players listed on the Club Pass Roster - see below). The maximum number of Club Pass players five (5) based on the number of players on a Team Roster. Club Pass players must come from within your club. Only players that hold a current US Youth Soccer member pass may be club pass for a team from within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated club.

3.03 Transfers

Transfers within the conference are not allowed during the season. Once a player is on a conference roster, such player is frozen on such a team's pool of 30 players for the remainder of the conference season.

3.04 Maximum Number of Players Used in the Season by the Team

A team is allowed to list and use no more than 30 players during a season that includes all players listed on the Team Roster during a season plus any Club Pass players listed.

3.05 Submission of Team Roster

Teams must file a Conference roster, which includes its State Association approved Primary and Club Pass Players. All teams must submit their official Conference Team Roster of players no later than seven (7) days prior to the team's scheduled first game.

3.06 Additions to Team Roster

Additional players can be added to the Conference roster at any time leading up to a game using the roster building walkthrough on the conference website under the Team Information drop-down. We cannot guarantee Conference staff assistance with adding any players to Conference rosters after 3 PM ET on the Friday prior to any weekend games.

3.07 Player Limitations

A primary rostered player may only play for one team in a Conference Division in which their primary team is participating. In situations where a club has multiple teams participating in the same Conference Division, at no time may such primary players appear on both Conference Division rosters. Under no circumstances may a player be listed on multiple team rosters if such teams are from different clubs.

During the Conference season, a player may play for only one (1) conference team per day. 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.

3.08 Game Card

No more than 18 active players may appear on your team's GotSport Game Card and play in any one game. Your GotSport Game Card will list all rostered players (up to 30 players). Any inactive players **MUST be clearly crossed off** on your GotSport Game Card. Player name write ins on the game card are NOT permitted under any circumstances.

3.09 Team Rosters – General Overview

- a) The maximum Team Roster size is 22. The minimum Team Roster size is 9.
- b) An initial Team Roster is to be filed with the Conference Office no later than seven days prior to a team's first Season Conference game. Additional players can be added to the Conference roster at any time leading up to a game using the roster building walkthrough on the conference website under the Team Information drop-down. We cannot guarantee Conference staff assistance with adding any players to Conference rosters after 1 PM ET on the Friday prior to any weekend games.
- c) All Conference rosters are submitted through GotSport.
- d) While players may be added to a team's Conference roster throughout the course of the season, (subject to the 30-player maximum limit), once a player is on a Conference roster, such player is frozen on such team's roster for the remainder of the Conference season. Teams may not remove Primary players once they are placed/added to a Conference roster except if such change is done prior to a team playing its first Conference game of the season and with written approval from the League Manager.

3.10 Club Pass Players – General Overview

- a) In the Conference, only players that hold a current US Youth Soccer member pass from within the same US Youth Soccer affiliated Club may be a Club Pass player. In other words, a US Youth Soccer member player may "guest" on a Conference team if such player is rostered on a

team from within the same affiliated club. The home State Association for a team will determine the definition of club pass for this purpose.

- b) At no time may a Primary player from another Conference team be listed as a Club Pass player on another team within the same division.
- c) For all age levels the maximum number of Club Pass player limits will vary based on the number of primary players on the Team Roster.
- d) Under no circumstances will the Conference allow a team to utilize more than 30 total players during the course of a season.
- e) Additional players can be added to the Conference roster at any time leading up to a game using the roster building walkthrough on the conference website under the Team Information drop-down. We cannot guarantee Conference staff assistance with adding any players to Conference rosters after 3 PM ET on the Friday prior to any weekend games.
- f) Teams may add Club Pass players to their Conference roster throughout the course of a Conference season provided that total number of Club Pass players does not exceed the maximum allowed.
- g) Teams may not remove Club Pass players once they are placed/added to a Conference roster except if such change is done prior to a team playing its first Conference game of the season and with written approval from the League Manager.
- h) If any player/s on the roster are club pass carded players with the same player number as another player on their team, alternative jerseys should be used. If an alternative is not available, then the number must be edited with washable paint (not tape) and the game card should be edited to match. This is not permissible at the National Tier of National League but is permissible at the conference level.

SECTION 4. SCORE SUBMISSIONS

4.01 Score Submission

All match scores must be entered by the WINNING team. In the event of a tie, the team listed first on the schedule should be the team that enters the score and paperwork. This **MUST** be done before leaving the facility. Scores must be entered within 24 hours of the game being played.

SECTION 5. NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – FINES

5.01 Forfeits

Any games that are forfeited within 10 days of a scheduled game date and time may result in the offending team paying the full referee fees for the forfeited game, an additional \$250 forfeiture fee payable to EDP Soccer and any field fees that may have been incurred by the host as determined by the League Manager. Forfeits for any other reason may result in a \$250 forfeiture fee. Additional late fees will be added if fine invoices are not paid by the due date. Due dates will be provided when the fine is invoiced through GotSport.

5.02 Advancement to Regionals

The top team (non-state cup champion) from each age group and gender competing in the top tier of Premier I of the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference may qualify for 2024 Eastern Regional Championships in the same seasonal year as the US Youth Soccer North Atlantic Conference. To remain qualified for Regionals, a team must also play in their state association's State Cup competition (unless a waiver is received from the state association, see National League Rules). Please note that 13U and 14U Regionals qualifiers come from the spring season standings, not the fall season. Any team that achieves an automatic qualification slot to Regionals from the conference is expected to honor the commitment to

participate in the Eastern Regional Competition. Failure to field a team in such Regional Competition may result in a \$500 league fine. Additional late fees will be added if fine invoices are not paid by the due date. Due dates will be provided when the fine is invoiced through GotSport.

5.03 League Fines

Any team that is subject to a league fine/s must pay such fine/s immediately upon notification from League officials. You will receive written email notification from the League of such fines. Any team failing to pay fines imposed on their team may result in such team being suspended from the conference for subsequent years. Any club with a team that is suspended shall receive a warning to their club. If repeated team fines are not paid from said club, the warned club may have all teams suspended from the League for subsequent years. All league fines once issued can be paid through your team GotSport account. Additional late fees will be added if fine invoices are not paid by the due date. Due dates will be provided when the fine is invoiced through GotSport.

SECTION 6. NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE – PROTESTS AND FINAL AUTHORITY

6.01 Protests

Protests must be made in accordance with USYS National League Conference Rules, Section 20. To be valid and eligible for consideration, a protest must be noted on the GotSport Game Card and 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 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.

6.02 Final Authority

The League Manager shall have final authority to act in the best interest of the North Atlantic Conference, which may include but not limited to addressing situations not covered in the North Atlantic Conference Operating Procedures.