



NEW JERSEY YOUTH SOCCER

2021 National Championship Series Rules

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NEW JERSEY YOUTH SOCCER
New Jersey Youth Soccer
569 Abbington Dr. Suite 5, East Windsor NJ

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules



I. INTRODUCTION

The NJYS National Championship competition is for top tier teams and is part of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series. The Series begins at the State level, and depending on the age group, champions advance to the Regional level and then the National level. The competition is for both boys and girls NJYS teams at the 11U through the 19U age groups. U12 and above champions advance to the Regional competition. U13 and above Regional winners advance to the National competition.

Note: Per US Youth Soccer and its application to the NJYS National Championship Series, “the oldest admissible age group FOR THE 2020-21 SEASONAL YEAR ONLY will be 19/20-U. Eligible players’ must be born on or after January 1, 2001. This one-year change is in place to allow players to participate in one additional year of eligibility due to the missed programming as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

II. STRUCTURE

- a. The NJYS National Championship Series will consist of one single elimination tournament with divisions as determined by NJYS. It will be open to all travel team boys and girls with age groups as follows: 11U and 12U (9v9) and 13U to 19U (11v11) age groups in the spring.

Note: 10U or younger teams are not permitted to play up in the competition.

- b. With the exception of the finals, the format will be home and away with NJYS determining those designations. The home team will be responsible for securing the field.
- c. For the semifinals, the higher seeded will be designated the home team. The home team will be responsible for field.
- d. Players/teams entering the NJYS National Championship Series are ineligible to enter the NJYS President Cup or Challenge Cup at any level.
- e. NJYS conducts random flighting to determine match ups. Only the previous year’s semifinalists are seeded and placed in the brackets as far away from each other as possible.

III. ADVANCEMENT

- a. Any team wishing to participate in the USYS National Championships, or the USYS Eastern Regional Championships should enter this tournament. The NJYS National

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

Championship Series determines the teams representing NJYS in the 12U through 19/20U age groups at the USYS Eastern Regional Championships. If applicable, regional champions (only in the 13U through 19U age groups) then advance to the USYS National Championships.

- b. Eligibility for the USYS Eastern Regional Championships is according to placement in the NJYS National Championship Series. By registering for the NJYS National Championship, teams agree to represent NJYS in the regional competition should they qualify. The USYS East Region can fine NJYS \$1,500 per team for failing to provide a team for the tournament. A NJYS state champion that forfeits its place is subject to that fine.
- c. Teams advancing to the USYS East Region competition will be assigned a hotel/housing contracted by the USYS East Region. Teams opting out of that assignment should expect to pay the fee designated by the USYS.
- d. The NJYS state champion has the first option to advance but should that team decline, the finalist would be given the option to participate. Therefore, teams participating in the NJYS NCS semifinal games will be asked to reconfirm their commitment to attend the USYS Eastern Regional Championship event representing NJYS.
- e. Teams that do not win their state cup championship may still be called upon to attend the USYS Eastern Presidents Cup as a finalist or wildcard entry (e.g., if the state champion is not available).

IV. VENUE SELECTION

- a. NJYS will select venues for the NJYS State Cups tournaments finals unless otherwise communicated by NJYS. All other rounds will be played following home and away format with NJYS determining those designations each round.

V. REGISTRATION AND TEAM ELIGIBILITY

a. Travel Team Qualifications for Application

- a. Teams must compete in at least a 4-team approved league flight during the current seasonal year in a US Youth Soccer affiliated league (e.g., NJYS, USYS Regional League, USYS National League, and/or other USYS state association).
- b. Leagues are required to schedule a minimum of one game against each of the different teams participating in the flight.
- c. Notwithstanding this minimum playing requirement, a team must complete their entire league schedule. For example, if a league schedules 10 games during a season, a team must play ten games to qualify. League procedures for forfeits must also be adhered to and games postponed (e.g., due to weather will be taken into consideration).
- d. Teams participating in the USYS National League or in the NL Regional EDP Conference Premier 1, 2, & 3 divisions are not eligible to compete in the Presidents Cup.

b. Applications

- a. Teams must apply through their Sports Connect account or [NJYS website](#).

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

- b. An official NJYS state roster and the appropriate entry fee must be received before the application can be accepted.
- c. These items must be received by NJYS prior to the published deadline date to avoid a potential penalty. The individual team takes responsibility for adhering to this deadline.
- c. **Team Registration**
 - a. 11U – 19U National Championship Series team registration fees are as follows:
 - 1. \$210 (early registration one week prior to final registration deadline)
 - 2. \$235 (the week of final registration)
- d. **Dates of Competitions**
 - a. Dates for all rounds of the NJYS NCS are published on the NJYS website (www.njyouthsoccer.com).
 - b. Teams not prepared to play all games on all the scheduled dates should not enter the competition.
- e. **Player Eligibility**
 - a. Each player entering the competition must carry a USYS member pass.
 - b. No player may present or play with a player pass issued by any other US Soccer member organization (i.e., US Club, Super-Y, non-NJYS).
 - c. The USYS member pass, rosters, and any revisions must be processed, and players age verified by NJYS. Any violation of this rule results in fines and/or suspension.

No Pass – No Play – No Exceptions

- d. Valid player passes are required for each player in every game. Passes may be displayed digitally through the NJYS Digital Member Pass portal. *Note: A paper pass must be available upon the request of the referee.*
- e. A player can only be rostered on or play with one team in any level of NJYS State Cups competitions (Presidents Cup, National Championship Series, Challenge Cup) during a seasonal year.
- f. **Club Pass Players**
 - 1. A team participating in the NJYS National Championship Series may add a club pass player to the state level competition roster so long as (1) it is before the competition roster freeze date, (2) the player's primary team is not participating and did not participate in NJYS State Cups competition during the current seasonal year, (3) the player is not participating and did not participate as a club pass player with another team in NJYS State Cups competition during the current seasonal year, and (4) the team maintains a continuity of 9 players from the Official State Roster for each match.
 - 2. Teams that compete in the National League Conferences or National League and wish to add Club Pass players to their roster for State Cup

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

MAY do so ONLY IF (a) the player(s) are REGISTERED to the Club prior to the State Association freeze date and (b) National Conference League has ended prior to the State Association freeze date.

- g. Guest players are ***not*** eligible to play in the NJYS NCS. If a guest player appears on an NJYS NCS Roster, that team may be disqualified from the competition.
 - h. Secondary Permissions for players are ***not*** provided for the NJYS National Championship Series, even though the team's NJYS league may permit secondary permissions. If a player with a secondary permission appears on an NJYS National Championship roster, that team will be disqualified from the competition.
 - i. **Any team using an ineligible player(s) will forfeit all of its tournament games and may be subject to fines.**
- f. **Coach Eligibility**
- a. All team officials, coaches, assistant coaches, managers, etc. must also be listed on the official roster, official game card (generated by NJYS online registration system) and have a current valid member pass.
 - b. A maximum of four (4) carded coaches, assistant coaches, or trainers for each team will be permitted on the sidelines.
 - c. The referees are instructed to enforce the NJYS State Cups, "No Pass-No Play rule."
- g. **Rosters**
- a. NJYS will accept roster additions, releases, and transfers up to the roster freeze date set by NJYS, in conformance with the then-applicable regulations of the NJYS NCS.
 - b. A team's roster is frozen for the competition.
 - 1. Players can be added to a team's league roster but will not be eligible to play in the NJYS National Championship Series.
 - 2. A team can add an eligible coach to a frozen roster.
- h. **Bracket Change**
- a. If a team requests to change its State Cup tournament preference (NJYS NCS, NJYS Presidents Cup, Challenge Cup) after the registration deadline, but before the brackets are completed, it may incur a \$50 change fee (if approved by NJYS).
 - b. If this request to change occurs after the brackets are posted, the team may incur a \$200 change fee (if approved by NJYS).
 - c. Teams that withdraw prior to the final registration deadline are eligible for a full refund of their registration fee. Teams that withdraw after the registration deadline but prior to the tournament draw may incur a \$50 processing fee. Teams that withdraw after the tournament draw are subject to the Forfeit rules (see section g. of Rules of Competition).

VI. ROSTER SIZES

- a. 11U and 12U (9v9) teams can have a maximum of 18 players on the official roster, from which a maximum of 16 are eligible on the game-day roster.

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

- b. 13U through 19U (11v11) teams can have a maximum of 22 players on official the roster, from which a maximum of 18 players are eligible on the game-day roster.

VII. RULES OF COMPETITION

- a. The playing rules of the NJYS NCS shall conform to the IFAB Laws of the Game, except as provided in this document.
- b. **Home Team:** The Home team must:
 - 1. Provide their opponent with confirmation of game time, location, and directions to the home team's venue. This must be sent, via email communication, no less than 72 hours prior to the scheduled kickoff.
 - 2. Properly mark the field of play.
 - 3. Provide a proper game ball.
 - 4. Provide proper goals and nets that are secured/anchored.
 - 5. Confirm that a referee has been assigned by a certified NJ State Referee Assignor for any game that has had a change in time, place, or date since originally scheduled and confirmed with the opposing team.
 - 6. Inform the away team about the color of their uniform (in accordance with the uniform policy in the rules of competition).
 - 7. *If both teams are properly notified per the parameters above and following a 15-minute grace period, one team fails to show up and/or field a minimum of 7 players; the game may be forfeited to the showing team (extenuating circumstances may be favorably considered by NJYS). The referee at the field will **NOT** make any forfeit determination. Only NJYS can make this determination. Should both teams fail to meet this deadline, and the referee deems the field playable, both teams will forfeit.*
- c. **Score Reporting:**
 - a. The referee and the winning team is expected to report the score in Sports Connect with 24 hours of the game being completed. Failure to report your score in a timely manner may result in your team losing the opportunity to host a future home game.
- d. **Results**
 - a. Game results will be posted on the NJYS website within 24 hours after the completion of the game.
- e. **Scheduling**
 - a. NJYS oversees scheduling for all tournament games. The initial determination of home and away teams will be done by random selection. NJYS also has the ability to mandate any game date change.
 - b. NJYS NCS games have priority over NJYS league and other games.
- f. **Contingency Scheduling**
 - a. A game can be postponed by NJYS, referee, or the home team if, for example, the weather has made the field unplayable.

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

- b. Every attempt should be made to play the game as scheduled. The home team must notify NJYS, the Referee Assignor, and the opposing team by 10:00 AM on the day of the game or at least three (3) hours in advance of the scheduled game time (whichever is earlier).
- c. The referee and NJYS will be proactive in declaring a field unplayable due to inclement weather conditions.
- d. Any game canceled due to an unplayable field or adverse weather that prevents a team from traveling to the venue site, NJYS will determine the rescheduling. If the home field is playable, teams should be expected to play.
- e. Any game not postponed by 10:00am shall be considered as *ON* and only the referee shall have the authority at this point to judge the fitness of the grounds.
- f. Any postponed game must be played by Wednesday immediately preceding the next game date unless otherwise approved by NJYS.

g. Forfeit

- i. Any team forfeiting a game must notify NJYS by Tuesday before the game is scheduled and follow up with a written confirmation to the NJYS State Office via statecups@njyouthsoccer.com.
- ii. If, for any reason, the game is not played by the Wednesday deadline, NJYS may determine the result as a forfeit for both teams.
- iii.
- iv. The forfeiting team(s) may be assessed a fine according to the following schedule:

Quarterfinal Game	\$200 plus referee costs
Semi-Final Game	\$250 plus referee costs
Final Game	\$350 plus referee costs

All fines must be paid within ten days of notification. Failure to pay any fine may result in a suspension from all affiliated play.

g. Unfinished Games

- i. Unfinished games due to any cause will ***not*** be replayed, provided neither team is at fault, and the first half has been completed.
- ii. If the first half has been completed and play cannot be resumed and provided neither team is at fault, NJYS and may deem the game complete.
- iii. Should play be stopped at any time due to one of the teams being adjudged at fault, it will be at the discretion of NJYS as to whether the game is to be replayed or declared a forfeit.

h. Substitutions

- i. For 13U and 14U age groups, unlimited substitutions shall be allowed
- ii. All other age groups, a maximum of 7 substitutions for each Team shall be allowed in each game during each half of play and during overtime play. After leaving the game during a half of play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game during that same half of play. After leaving the game during overtime play, the substituted player may not re-enter the game.

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

- iii. If a player is suspected of suffering a head injury, he/she may be substituted for evaluation without the substitutions counting against the Teams total number of allowed substitutions during each half or overtime period. If the player with the suspected head injury has received clearance from the events' Health Care Professional, the player may re-enter at any stoppage of play. The evaluated player must replace the original substitute and will not count as a substitution. The temporary substituted player may re-enter the game as a regular substitute. A Team may only make a temporary substitution if they have a substitution available.

i. Protests

NJYS will hear and decide protests, appeals, and commissions for NJYS National Championship Competition, subject to the following conditions:

- i. A protest must be verbally lodged with the referee and the opposing coach before leaving the game site.
- ii. The referee must note it on the game report, and NJYS must be notified of any protest within four (4) hours of the game completion or immediately following the game's completion when games are played at a central site.
- iii. With regard to the referees at the match, only the misapplication of the Laws of the Game is subject to protest. Judgment calls (such as foul and misconduct) are not subject to protest.
- iv. A protest must be submitted in writing via email to NJYS (statecups@njyouthsoccer.com) within 24 hours of the game by a team official listed on the roster involved in the game.
- v. The fee for a protest is \$300 and must be either sent to the NJYS State Office. For the events hosted by NJYS (e.g. finals), the protest must be delivered to the NJYS Site Coordinator within two (2) hours of the game's conclusion or sent via mail and postmarked no later than the next working day. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be returned. If denied, the fee will be retained.
- vi. Written complaints can be filed without a fee, but they will not result in a change in the game result.

j. Conduct

- i. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators.
- ii. Abuse of the referees will not be tolerated.
- iii. Misconduct by parents and/or spectators will be referred to the NJYS Discipline and Appeals Committee for disciplinary action.
- iv. All coaches of competing teams are to remain within a ten (10) yard technical area (coaching box) on their side of the field.
- v. At games played at a centralized location, both players and coaches will be on one side of the field as specified by NJYS.
- vi. All parents and spectators will remain on the spectator sideline during the match and until such time as the coaches have released the players after the match and referees have vacated the field of play. Failure to remain off the field of play until

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

- such time will result in an ejection for the coach and possible forfeit of the match.
- vii. For games at a centralized location, A maximum of four (4) carded, coaches, assistant coaches, administrators, trainers who are listed on the team's approved roster will be permitted on the sidelines.
 - viii. Coaches are not permitted to coach from the spectators' side of the field.
 - ix. Coaching is only permitted from inside the technical area.

k. Length of Games, Overtime Periods, and Ball Specifications

Age Group	Duration	Halftime	Overtime	Ball Size
17U, 18U and 19U (11v11)	Two [2]-45-minute halves	10 min	Two [2]-10-minute halves	5
15U, 16U (11v11)	Two [2]-40-minute halves	10 min	Two [2]-10-minute halves	5
13U, 14U (11v11)	Two [2]-35-minute halves	5 min	Two [2]-10-minute halves	5
11U, 12U (9v9)	Two [2]-30-minute halves	5 min	Two [2]-5-minute halves	4

l. Ball

- i. At the preliminary stage and quarterfinal games, the home team will supply the referee with two (2) game balls.
- ii. At semifinal and final games, all matches will be played with a ball supplied by NJYS.

m. Overtime for Quarterfinals, Semifinals, and Finals

- i. If a game goes into overtime, both overtime periods must be played in entirety.
- ii. A brief hydration break will be provided between the overtime halves; however, players may not leave the field of play.
- iii. If a game is still tied at the end of overtime, the match will be decided in accordance with the FIFA Instructions Regarding the Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

n. Uniforms

a. Logo Rules

- 1. No team will wear the logo, insignia, or another identifying mark of a non-US Youth Soccer organization (e.g., US Club, NPL, Super Y) on their uniforms. Teams are expected to remove the marks, cover the marks, or change uniforms to comply with this rule.
- 2. If a team fails to adhere to these rules, the referee will be asked to report the issue after the game, and the team may be subject to a team fine.

b. Player Jerseys

- 1. Each player must have a unique number on their jersey. The number should be a size of six inches. Each player must have a number affixed to the back of his/her jersey. Duplicate and/or taped numbers are not permitted. A numbered jersey for the goalkeeper is recommended. If the team moves onto the USYS Eastern Region Championship and the USYS

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

National Championship, a numbered jersey for goalkeepers is required.

c. **Team Colors**

1. In the event of color conflicts as determined by the game officials, the home team will adjust its uniform to that of the visiting team. Each team must have two uniform sets (one light color and one dark color) at each State Cup game. In addition, teams should communicate jersey colors in advance of the game to avoid problems at the game.

o. **Hydration Breaks**

- a. Prior to the match's start, the referee will make a decision, or the NJYS at a central site, to implement a hydration break.
- b. The break occurs at the midpoint of each half and at the end of each overtime period (if played).
- c. The break will be implemented when the heat index is above 85 degrees at game time.
- d. The break will be given at a normal stoppage of play, and all players must remain on the field.

p. **Referees**

- a. NJYS will work with the NJ State Referee Committee to assign referees for the finals only (unless otherwise communicated by NJYS).
- b. Referee fees will be split by teams 50/50 for play dates, quarterfinal rounds, and semifinal rounds. NJYS will assign and pay referee fees for the final round. The established fees are:

Age Group	Referee	AR	Per Team
18U & 19U	\$80.00	\$50.00	\$90.00
15U – 17U	\$80.00	\$50.00	\$90.00
11U – 14U	\$70.00	\$40.00	\$75.00

- c. The USSF approved referee assignment policy is preferred when assigning referees:
 1. Referee and two neutral uniformed assistant referees.
 2. Referee and two club linesmen.
 3. One referee is working alone.
- d. In the event that no assigned referee appears at the field within 30 minutes of the scheduled game time, two choices are available:
 1. The game may be played with a mutually acceptable substitute referee.
 2. Both teams may elect to play the game at another time but before the following Wednesday. NJYS must be notified. The home team will lose the home-field advantage.
 3. Failure of a referee to show up will not be the cause for canceling or protesting a game. Please see Section IV, Part P for more details.

q. **Before the start of each game**

- a. Each team will give the referee an official NJYS computer-generated game card. Handwritten information on the game card with the exception of jersey numbers

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

is not permitted.

- b. The referee will inspect all players and coaches passes and hold all passes until the end of the game.
 1. The home team shall be inspected first
 2. Any challenges by either team will be noted on the game report by the referee, and the player will be allowed to play.
 3. Challenges of players must be made at the time of player pass inspection.
 4. NJYS, through the State Registrar, shall address the challenges of players.
 5. The referee will determine the field's suitability for play, noting any improperly prepared fields on the game report.

r. After the Game

a. Game Reporting

1. The referee will report the score, red cards, yellow cards, through the online match reporting system (listed on the gamecard) within 24 hours of the game start time.

2. Red Cards

- a. Referees will submit a supplemental report to their assignor and to NJYS by email (statecups@njyouthsoccer.com) within 24 hours of the game, and preferably the same day.
- b. Details of the player name, pass #, team, club, and the reason for the dismissal should be included.
- c. The pass of a player/coach who is sent off the field (red carded) will be given back to the coach.
- d. For games hosted at a central location (e.g., finals), the red card will be reported on the game card. The game card will then be given to the onsite NJYS representative to be recorded in the NJYS reporting system. All other passes will be returned to the coach at the conclusion of the game.
- e. *NJYS will record the pass numbers of any player or coach sent off for the duration of the penalty. Penalties for individuals sent off will be carried over to the next NJYS State Cups competition (e.g., or NCS, Presidents Cup or Challenge Cup) where applicable. The suspended player or coach will be noted on the game card for the period of the penalty.*

Red Card Violation	Minimum Penalty
Second Caution in the Same Match ¹	Remainder of the game
Denying a goal an Obvious goal Scoring Opportunity by	Remainder of the game

2021 NJ Youth Soccer National Championship Series Rules

Offense other than Handling	
Denying a Goal or an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity by Handling	1 game/1 week
Serious Foul Play	2 games/2 weeks
Offensive, insulting, abusive language, and/or Gestures	2 games/2 weeks
Violent Conduct ²	3 games/ 3 weeks
Spitting or Biting	3 games/ 3 weeks
Entering the Video Operation Room	3 games/ 3 weeks

¹*The minimum suspension is one additional match if two cautions are:*

- a) *Two Dissent*
- b) *Two Unsporting Behavior*
- c) *one each of Dissent and Unsporting Behavior*

²*If the Violent Conduct is either referee assault or referee abuse, the minimum suspension is one calendar year, plus a referral to the NJYS Discipline and Appeals Committee for further review and sanctions.*

3. The referee will record any game protested by either coach on the game report and email NJYS (statecups@njyouthsoccer.com).

s. **Game Report and Roster**

- a. Before the game, each team will give the referee an official NJYS computer-generated game card. *Handwritten information on the game card with the exception of jersey numbers is not permitted.*
- b. Coaches will be permitted on the sideline provided they possess a valid (up to date) coaches pass.
- c. Only players on the game card may compete in the game.
- d. Players not eligible must remain on the parents' side of the field and may not be dressed in uniform.
- e. For games at the centralized location (e.g. finals), the game roster will be produced by NJYS and generated by the roster frozen before tournament flighting.

VIII. **PROPER BEHAVIOR ON THE SIDELINES**

Teams waiting for their match cannot warm up or congregate along the goal line of an active field or between fields. For games hosted by NJYS, NJYS will designate an area for teams waiting for their match and teams are expected to stay within the area for their warm-up activities. Teams not adhering to this requirement will be subject to disciplinary action and may be fined.

Proper behavior is required on the sidelines. Your cooperation and that of your players and spectators will be greatly appreciated.