Emerald Cup 2026 Rules and Policies

This tournament will follow USYSA guidelines except as modified herein. All players and coaches must be registered with USYSA through their State Association. The proper State Rosters, Player Passes, Medical Waivers, Player Loan Agreements and Travel Permits will be required. All disputes, outside the field of play, will be ruled upon by the Tournament Directors, whose decisions will be final.

1. TEAM ACCEPTANCE - The tournament committee reserves the right to accept or reject any team application. Once accepted by the Tournament Committee, the application fee is non-refundable.

2. TEAM ELIGIBILITY - This tournament shall be open to all teams registered and in good standing with USYSA or US Club Soccer.

3. ROSTER LIMITATIONS

U8-U10 (7v7) – 14 which may include 5 guest players
U10-U12 (9v9) – 18 which may include 5 guest players
U12-U19 (11v11) – 22 which may include 5 guest players – A maximum of 18 players are allowed to participate in each game.

No player is allowed to play on two teams at the same age.

Once a team's first game has kicked off, no players may be added to the roster.

4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY - All players must be legally registered to US Club Soccer or USYSA through their respective state association. Player passes must be current, valid, verified, laminated and with photo attached. Players are permitted to play on two teams in the tournament as long as the teams are bracketed in different age groups. However, when playing in two different age groups, the same player can only play in the same level as their primary team (e.g., an under 12 gold level player is able to play in under 13 gold, but is not able to play in under 13 silver). No player is allowed to play on two teams of the same age.

5. GUEST PLAYERS – A maximum of five (5) guest players will be allowed per team, with the proper paperwork. All guest players must have player passes, medical waiver and loan forms. Guest players must play at the same level as the team they are guest playing for.

6. AGE GROUPS – Age groups will be as listed by USYSA with the January 1st cutoff. Players will be permitted to play up in age groups as long as guest player forms are completed and the level of play is the same (e.g., U12 Gold and U13 Gold).

7. TEAM CHECK-IN – All teams must check-in online or in person. No changes to the roster will be permitted once play has been initiated in the first game. USYSA teams not registered through KSYSA must provide travel permits at check-in. US Club and USSSA registered teams are not required to submit travel permits. Each team must provide the following at check-in:

- Official State Roster
- Player Passes/cards
- Guest Player Loan forms (if applicable)
- Medical waivers

8. PRE-GAME PROCEDURE - Field Marshals or Referees will conduct the pregame check-in when appropriate, in order to minimize delay between games. The referee may review the results of the check-in with the field marshal and make the final ruling on any questions.
Only at this pregame procedure may a player be challenged by an opposing manager/coach. Challenged players will be noted by the Referee on the Referee game report, but will be allowed to participate in the game so long as they have valid, verified player passes and are listed on the validated roster. A player who arrives at the playing field after the pregame procedure may enter the game once the game officials verify the player is eligible, and with the permission of the center referee. A late-arriving player may be challenged at the time he is allowed to participate by the center official.

9. TEAM BENCHES – Both teams will be situated on the same side and the spectators will be on the opposite side of the field.

10. MATCH BALL – Each team shall furnish a regulation game ball to the referee prior to the game. The referee will then select the game ball. U8-U12 (7v7,9v9) age groups will use size 4 balls and U12 (11v11) and older age groups will use size 5 balls.

11. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT – Each team must provide matching uniforms with a different number on the back of each player's shirt. In the event of both teams having similar colors, the referee may require the away team to change their appearance. Shin guards are mandatory with all rigid materials covered completely by the socks. All athletic shoes are allowed except those with toe and/or metal cleats. All player equipment is subject to referee approval.

12. HEADING RESTRICTIONS – At age groups U11 and younger, deliberate heading will result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the infraction occurs in the goal box, the free kick will be taken from the nearest edge of the box parallel to the goal line.

13. SUBSTITUTIONS - Substitution may be made only with the Referee's permission at the following times:

a. Prior to a throw-in by your team or if both teams are waiting to substitute both teams will be allowed to substitute at the same time.
b. Prior to a goal kick by either team.
c. After a goal by either team.
d. At half time or the beginning of overtime periods.
e. After an injury, by either team, when the referee stops play.

Substitutes may enter field of play only after receiving permission from the referee.

14. CASTS/ORTHOPEDIC BRACES – These may be used if, at the discretion of the referee, they are deemed not dangerous to any of the players on the field.

15. DURATION OF THE GAME - the duration of games will be as follows:

Age Group Duration
U8-U10 (7v7) 2 x 25 = 50 mins
U10-U12 (9v9) 2 x 30 = 60 mins
U12-U16 (11v11) 2 x 30 = 60 mins
U17-U19 (11v11) 2 x 35 = 70 mins

16. OVERTIME –There will be no overtime periods in pool play or the knock-out stages. Penalty kicks will be used to decide the outcome of semifinal and final games only; pool play games will end as the score is recorded at the end of regulation time. If a referee shall err and allow a pool play game to go to overtime the official score shall stand as the score at the end of regulation time.

17. SHOOTOUT – In the event of a tie in semifinal or final games, a FIFA style penalty kick shootout will determine the winner.
18. FORFEITS – The minimum number of players required for each game format is as follows: 11v11 – 7, 9v9 – 5, 7v7 – 4. A 5-minute grace period will be extended beyond the scheduled kick-off time before a forfeit shall be declared, unless other arrangements have been reached with the tournament director. Failure to complete a match, or a team leaving the field during play, will result in forfeiture. No team that has forfeited a match will be declared a group winner for advancement purposes. Forfeits will be recorded with a score of 1-0.
19. CONTROL OF SIDELINE CONDUCT - Players, reserve players, managers, coaches, assistant coaches and fans are expected to conduct themselves with the letter and spirit of "THE LAWS OF THE GAME." The site directors have the authority and responsibility to remove any person(s) from the tournament for abuses to good conduct, in addition to any specific disciplinary action brought about by other authority. A maximum of three registered coaches will be allowed in the technical area. Coaches are responsible for their spectators. If the referee feels the spectators are disrupting the game, they will instruct the coaches to control them or usher them to the parking area. A coach may be ejected for his/her own and/or their spectators for additional games. If a team does not have at least one of their registered coaches in the technical area, the game will be terminated and that team will forfeit.
20. PROTEST - There will be NO PROTESTS. All disputes will be resolved immediately by the Site Director. These decisions will be final. Please note that under no circumstances may a referee's decision, issuance of a red or yellow card, or coach or team ejection be reviewed or overturned.
21. DELAY OF START - Any team delaying the start of a scheduled game by more than 15 minutes without authorization from the tournament director shall forfeit the game to the opponent. Forfeits will be recorded with a score of 1 to 0.
22. POST-GAME PROCEDURE - We ask that, as a mutual courtesy, both teams congratulate each other after every game. The tournament committee allows souvenir patches, pins, etc. to be exchanged during the handshake after the game. The following procedures should also be used:
• The Referee or Field Marshals will ensure the return of all player passes to each team
• Referee will complete the Game Report and deliver it with any incident reports to the Site Director Desk.
• Manager/coach of both teams will confirm the score with the referees
• Manager/coach of both teams will ensure that their sideline area is clean and that all trash is in containers.
23. RED CARDS AND TEAM DISCIPLINE - A red carded player will automatically miss the next scheduled game, but, depending on the severity of the unacceptable conduct, the Disciplinary Committee may recommend suspension up to the duration of the Tournament. Further disciplinary action by the State Association or national association may be recommended.
24. POINT SYSTEM
3 points for a Win
1 point for a Tie
0 points for a Loss
25. TIE BREAKERS – If, at the conclusion of the preliminary rounds, a tie breaker is needed to determine which team moves on to the semifinals or finals, the following criteria will be utilized:
i. Head to head (not used if more than two teams are involved in the tie breaker)
ii. Goal difference (i.e. goals scored minus goals allowed with 4 goal maximum differential, e.g. 10-1 games will be deemed 5-1)
iii. Most shut-outs
iv. Fewest goals allowed
v. FIFA style Penalty Kicks (scheduled at the discretion of the Tournament Director)
26. SHORTENING OF GAMES & WEATHER ISSUES. - In the event unusual conditions necessitate rescheduling, curtailment, or cancellation of games, the Tournament Director shall have absolute authority to make these changes to best serve the interest of the tournament.

It is possible that weather conditions may lead to stoppages in play. In the event that lightning/storming causes delays, the following procedures will be followed in order to ensure that we can keep games running on time over the course of the weekend.

1. If the delay occurs while the game is in progress, and the game cannot be restarted before the start of the next scheduled game, then the score of that game will be considered final. This is regardless of the length of time that the game had been played.
2. If conditions prevent a game from being played at all, the game will be listed as a 1-1 tie, and both teams will be awarded one point.
3. If a game can be started during its scheduled time, referees will be instructed to ensure that the following game starts on time. The game will be shortened accordingly.
4. If a game can be restarted during its scheduled period, it will also be shortened to ensure that the next game starts on time.

27. REFUND POLICY – The Tournament Committee, and/or host affiliate will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any team due to the cancellation in part or whole of this tournament or due to any team being removed from the tournament. Tournament cancellation prior to the commencement of the event will result in a refund of all but $170 of the total registration fee (to cover fixed costs such as staff costs, referee assignor fee, medals/trophies, printing/mailing, facility rentals, equipment rental, online registration fees, sanctioning costs, credit cards fees, etc,). Once the tournament begins, refunds for guaranteed games (3) not played will be given at a rate determined by the Tournament. (This is normally the total registration fee minus the $170 tournament fee, divided by the number of guaranteed games (3) not played). However, once two rounds of games have been played, no refunds will be given.
Teams withdrawing after the registration deadline, as listed on the tournament application, will forfeit their entire entry fee.
28. TOURNAMENT FORMAT – The following formats will be used throughout the tournament:
i. Divisions with 4 teams – there will be one pool with each team playing against each other. The two top teams will advance to the finals
ii. Divisions of 5 teams – Each team will play against each other (4 games each). The two top teams by record (then by tie breakers listed in section 24) will be declared champion and finalist.

iii. Divisions of 6 teams – There will be 2 brackets of 3 teams each. Each team will play the other two in its bracket and one crossover game. The top team in each bracket will advance to the final.
iv. Divisions of 8 teams – There will be 2 brackets of 4 teams. No crossover game with the top teams in each bracket meeting in the finals

The City of Overland Park, Overland Park Soccer Complex, Challenger Sports, Shawnee Soccer Club, KYSA, USYSA, tournament sponsors or any authorized representative, agent or employee of these shall not be responsible for any expense incurred by any team or person if the event is cancelled, in whole or in part, for any liability for personal injury or property loss in connection with traveling to, from or participating in the tournament. Every team, player and spectator shall participate at their own risk. The Tournament Directors' interpretation of the foregoing rules and policies as applied to any situation shall be final.