



HOUSTON WINTER BREAK CUP TOURNAMENT RULES

INTRODUCTION

Current FIFA laws of the game will be in effect except as modified herein. The Event Director reserves the right to decide all matters pertaining to the Event. The judgment of the Event Director is final. The Event Director has authority to make all decisions and these decisions will be final. All referee decisions are final and binding. Event committee will act upon any rules or items not listed. Protests are not allowed.

TEAM ROSTERS & ELIGIBILITY

Teams are required to have 2024-25 rosters and player cards signed by their league official. Player cards must have a picture and be laminated. Players must also have medical release forms, which do not need to be notarized. Players may only play for one team during the event unless an exception is granted by the Event Director.

AGE GROUP BIRTH YEAR	BALL SIZE	FORMAT	ROSTER SIZE	GUEST PLAYERS	GAME LENGTH	# OF REFEREES
U7 & U8 2017/18	Size 4	5v5	10	3	15 min halves	1
U9 2016	Size 4	7v7	14	4	20 min halves	1
U10 2015	Size 4	7v7	14	4	20 min halves	1
U11 2014	Size 4	9v9	16	6	25 min halves	1
U12 2013	Size 4	9v9	16	6	25 min halves	1
U13 2012	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3
U14 2011	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3
U15 2010	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3
U16 2009	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3
U17 2008	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3
U18/19 2007/06	Size 5	11v11	18	8	30 min halves	3

SCHEDULES & REGISTRATION

Coaching conflicts and/or requests are needed before schedules are published. Schedule is final as published and no changes will be allowed. Refunds will not be made once a team is accepted after the deadline for registration as stated on the event website. If a team withdraws prior to the registration deadline, the team will be subject to payment of a \$50 registration fee. Teams will not be accepted or scheduled until payment is received.

HOTELS

All Out of Town teams participating in the event are required to make housing reservations through our official Event housing agent accessible from our website. Out of Town teams are defined as a team that is located over 100 miles from the event fields. Any team who refuses to follow this rule will be disqualified from the event and will NOT receive a refund.

INCLEMENT WEATHER & CANCELLATION OF EVENT

Neither the Event Director nor the Event Sponsors are responsible for any expenses incurred by any team in the event that the Event is cancelled in whole, or in part; or in the event games are discontinued or cancelled due to inclement weather or adverse field conditions, nor will any refunds be



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made. Event Director reserves the right to adjust game length and schedule due to weather, field conditions or other conditions. The Event Committee may restructure the game lengths or cancel the event due to inclement weather. Once play has begun, there will be no refunds.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their team and spectators. Alcoholic beverages and pets are not allowed at the games. Absolutely no player will be allowed to play with a hard cast. Regardless of weather conditions, coaches and their teams must appear at the respective field site, ready to play as scheduled. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the match. Should a match be terminated/abandoned due to weather conditions after the game has begun the score at that time will stand. A FORFEIT shall be awarded if a team is not present and prepared to play within five minutes of the scheduled commencement time. It is requested that teams be present at least 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled commencement of a match to aid in the timely start of play. Seven players constitute a team when playing 11v11, six players when playing 9v9 and four players when playing 7v7. A forfeit will be scored 3-0. Teams must be ready to start all games at the scheduled time. Warm-up outside the touchlines prior to the game start time. There will be a spectator side and a technical side of the field. Coaches are responsible for making sure their teams and spectators adhere to this rule. Coaches are also responsible for rendering first aid to their players. Noise makers are not allowed.

UNIFORMS

The first team listed is the home team. Visitors will wear their light color and the Home will wear their darkest uniform. Team wearing wrong color will have to change. Each team shall submit a ball of appropriate size, weight and pressure to the referee. The referee shall select a game ball from those provided by each team.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Unlimited substitutions may be made with the permission of the referee at the following:

- Prior to throw-in, for either team
- Prior to a goal kick, by either team
- After a goal is scored, by either team
- After an injury when the referee stops play, by either team
- Immediately after a caution (cautioned player only)
- At half-time

SCORING

Event scoring will follow the 3-point system as follows:

- Three (3) points for a win
- One (1) point for a tie (Games in bracket play may end in a tie)
- Zero (0) points for a loss
- Forfeit result in three (3) points for the winning team (scored 3-0)
- One (1) point deduction for each red card assessed
- Points in first round games do not carry over to the semi-final or final games

Game cards must be filled out and signed by the referee (including any disciplinary action). Coaches are required to check the game card after the game and sign it. Referee turns card in to Event HQ tent immediately after the game.

TIEBREAKERS

Advancement Tiebreakers will be used as follows:

- Winner in head-to-head competition
- Net goals (goals difference, limit of +/- 3 per game)
- Most goals scored (maximum of 3 goals per game)
- Goals against (maximum of 3 goals per game)
- Most total wins
- FIFA Penalty kicks



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7v7 RULES

No heading is allowed and keepers cannot punt or drop kick the ball. We will use throw-ins and kick-in are not allowed. There will be direct & indirect kicks based on the foul and referees' decision. There will be pks from the spot for fouls in the box. No restraining lines. Kicks above the knees are ok.

5v5 RULES

- OFFSIDES: There are no offsides.
- GOAL SCORING: A goal may be scored by a touch in the offensive half of the playing field. A goal that is scored from the defensive half of the field will be disallowed and a free kick will be awarded to the defensive team on the half-way line.
- HEADING RULE: As per USSF recommendations there will be no heading in the U11 & below age groups.
- PENALTY KICKS: The penalty spot shall be on the line or penalty spot, at the center/top of the penalty box. U7-U8 is 8 yards from goal.
- FIVE YARD RULE: In all dead ball situations, defending players must stand at least five yards away from the ball.
- INDIRECT KICKS: All dead ball kicks (kick-ins, free kicks, kick-offs) are indirect with exception to corner and penalty kicks.
- GOALKEEPER DISTRIBUTION: All goalkeeper distribution (including goal kicks) must bounce or be touched by another player before crossing the halfway line. Violation will result in the award a free kick where the ball crossed the line.

BRACKETS, FLIGHTS, FINALS & AWARDS

Brackets for each flight will be on a first come first serve basis. Every consideration will be made to place all teams in an evenly matched bracket. The Bracketing Committee reserves the right to combine age groups or more teams to fill a bracket if necessary. Each team can select a Preferred Flight, but this is a request & not a guarantee: Gold (More Competitive), Silver (Competitive) & Bronze (Less Competitive).

First and second place teams will receive awards.

Brackets for the events will work in the following

- 4 team brackets: Round robin between four teams. Each team play three games and the top 2 teams play in the final
- 6 team brackets: Bracket is split into two groups of three. Group A teams play across the bracket against the three Group B teams. The top two points from the 6 teams play in the final
- 8 team brackets: Bracket is split into two groups of four teams. In each group the four teams play round robin format. The top team from each group plays in the final.

DISCIPLINARY

Any coach or player receiving a red card/ejection from a game will not be allowed to participate in that team's next game, at a minimum. Any player or coach guilty of assault (verbal or physical) on a referee will be removed from further Event participation. Two yellow cards received in the same game by the same player will be considered a red card and treated as such. Red/yellow cards must be reported on the game cards by the referee. Cards and other matters are reported to the Host State Association and the home club/league of the team. If a referee is late, the Event Director and/or Referee Coordinator will assign a substitute.