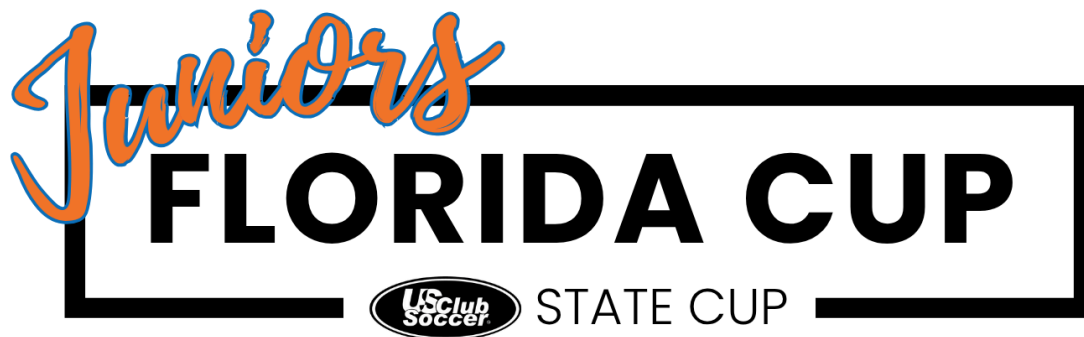


# 2025/26 Florida Cup Juniors Rules and Regulations



## **Section 1: Competition Rules**

### **1.1 – Playing Rules**

All Florida Cup Junior games shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by Florida Club League (FCL) which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/USSF except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

### **1.2 – Point System**

The Florida Cup shall operate under a point system. The point system shall award three points for a win, one point for a tie and no points for a loss.

### **1.3 – Tie Breakers**

In case of a tie-on points in the standings within a flight, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. “Head to Head” points between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential (up to 4)
3. Goals for (up to 4)
4. Goals against (up to 4)
5. Most wins
6. Most Shutouts
7. Penalty Shootout

If more than two teams are tied, the tie-breaking process will be used until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated.

In a situation where a group cannot be completed due to exceptional circumstances, and teams have played an unequal number of games, FCL may use Points Per Game (PPG) to decide group standings.

#### 1.4 – Game Details

	U8	U9-U10	U11	U12	U12 (11v11)
<b>*Field Size (yds)</b>	55/65 L 35/45 W	55/65 L 35/45 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	70/80 L 45/55 W	100/120 L 50/80 W
<b>**Number of Referees</b>	1	1	3	3	3
<b>Number of Players</b>	7v7	7V7	9v9	9v9	11v11
<b>Maximum Players per game day roster</b>	16	16	16	16	18
<b>Minimum # of Players</b>	5	5	6	6	7
<b>Goalkeeper</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Playing Time</b>	2x25	2x25	2x30	2x30	2x35
<b>Ball Size</b>	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Goal Mouth Size (feet)</b>	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	6.5x18.5 - 7x21	8x24
<b>Offside</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Substitutions</b>	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage	Any Stoppage
<b>Fouls (type of kick)</b>	Indirect Free Kicks Only	Indirect & Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks	Indirect / Direct Free Kicks
<b>Free Kick clearance</b>	8 yd	8 yd	8 yd	8 yd	10 yd

<b>Throw-in</b>	<b>1 Re-throw</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>	<b>Normal</b>
<b>Penalty Kicks</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 10 yds)</b>	<b>Yes (mark at 12 yds)</b>
<b>Penalty Area (yds)</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>12x24</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>14x36</b>	<b>18 x 44</b>
<b>Goal Area (yards)</b>	<b>4x8</b>	<b>4x8</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>5x16</b>	<b>6 x 20</b>
<b>Heading</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>	<b>per Laws/Rules</b>
<b>Build-Out Line</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>

\*\*Recommended minimum number of referees

\*Use of cones for lines allowed

### **1.5 – Heading Game Rule**

This rule is set up to follow the guideline set up by U.S. Soccer and U.S. Club Soccer. This rule shall apply to the age groups of U11 and below. Players who are playing up will play according to the rules of the age group in which they are playing. For a player that is U11 (refer to age group) and below, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

It is the team's responsibility to understand the effects of this rule on players playing up.

Please reference the U.S. Soccer and U.S. Club Soccer Initiative for Concussions and Head injuries [HERE](#).

### **1.7 – No Re-Entry Protocol (Head Injury)**

In accordance with the US Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Healthcare Professional.

## **1.8 – Healthcare Professional**

A healthcare professional is defined as “a licensed healthcare professional such as an athletic trainer certified (ATC), or a physician (MD/DO), with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.” It will be up to each club to decide whether they will provide a healthcare professional at their matches and to ensure that this individual has the correct certification to be evaluating players for head trauma. If a club plans to use a healthcare professional to evaluate suspected head injuries during a FCL match, the healthcare professional must be presented to the referee prior to the start of the match. Referees will not allow the re-entry of players removed from the field of play for suspected head injuries unless they are informed of the presence of, and meet with, a healthcare professional prior to the start of the match.

## **1.9 – Substitutions**

- 1.9.1 Substitutes are to enter the game at the centerline on the bench side of the field.
- 1.9.2 Teams at U8 - 12U age groups, unlimited substitutions shall be allowed.  
*Referees will be instructed not to allow substitutions that are deemed “excessive” or of a “time-wasting” nature. Please be respectful of the integrity of the game and do not use the free substitution rules as a means to disrupt the match.*
- 1.9.3 Substitutions may take place for both teams at the following times provided that permission is granted by the referee:
- 1.9.3.1 on a goal kick
  - 1.9.3.2 after a goal is scored
  - 1.9.3.3 on an injury, when the referee has stopped play
  - 1.9.3.4 at half time and the start of any overtime period (in the playoffs)
  - 1.9.3.5 after a caution is issued
  - 1.9.3.6 on a throw in – if the team in possession on the ball is permitted to substitute, the other team is allowed to also substitute provided the player was already at the center line ready to enter the field.
  - 1.9.3.7 on a corner kick -if the team in possession on the ball is permitted to substitute, the other team is allowed to also substitute provided the player was already at the center line ready to enter the field.

## **1.10 - Ties in Group Round**

If a Florida Cup Juniors Group Stage (U8-12) match is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.

## **1.11 - Matches Needing a Winner**

For matches that need a winner, the team with the most goals after regulation time will be the winner. If the match is tied after regulation, two full-time 5-minute overtime periods will be played. If the game is still tied after two overtime periods, then penalty kicks from the mark per FIFA will determine the winner.

## **1.12 - Incomplete games**

1.12.1 Games Considered Official: If one-half (50%) or more of the scheduled game time has been completed, the game shall be considered official and the score at the time of suspension will stand as the final result.

1.12.2 Games Stopped Before One-Half: If a match is suspended prior to the completion of one-half of the scheduled time, the game shall be replayed in its entirety at a time agreed upon by the competing teams in consultation with the Florida Cup Staff. The replayed game will begin at 0–0, regardless of the score at the time of suspension.

1.12.3 Team Misconduct Leading to Termination: If a game is terminated due to the actions of one team—including but not limited to poor sportsmanship, misconduct, or abusive behavior toward referees, opponents, or spectators—that team shall forfeit the match. The forfeiting team may also be subject to additional sanctions as determined by the FCL Board of Directors and the FCL Protest, Discipline, and Ethics Committee.

1.12.4 Neutral Suspensions (Weather/Unforeseen Events): If a match is suspended for reasons outside the control of the teams (e.g., weather, field conditions, injury delay, unforeseen circumstances), the rules regarding “Inclement Weather” Procedure” below and the “Games Considered Official” and “Games Stopped Before One-Half” will apply.

1.12.5 Inclement Weather Procedure: When inclement weather approaches, the following steps shall be taken for the safety of all players, coaches, referees, support staff, and spectators:

- Play must be suspended immediately when a detection system/mobile app confirms a strike within ten (10) miles of the facility. All participants must vacate the field and seek safe shelter.
- A thirty (30) minute rule shall apply. Once play is suspended, a thirty (30) minute countdown begins from the last lightning strike. Any new strike resets the thirty (30) minute clock. Play may not resume until the full thirty (30) minutes have passed without a new strike.
- Facilities equipped with Thor Guard or similar systems must follow their set protocols

for suspension and resumption of play. If the system has not been activated but verified lightning is detected within ten (10) miles, play must still be suspended.

- A maximum sixty (60) minute delay period shall apply as a bright-line rule:
  - a) If a match has not yet started, it must begin within sixty (60) minutes of the original scheduled kickoff time, or it will be rescheduled.
  - b) If a match has already started, play may only be delayed for up to sixty (60) minutes from the time play was stopped. If play cannot safely resume within that window, follow the procedures under section 1.12.1 or 1.12.2 depending on when the match was suspended.
  - c) The sixty (60) minute limit may be extended only if both teams mutually agree to continue waiting. In such cases, the League recommends that extensions beyond sixty (60) minutes be limited to reasonable circumstances (e.g., weather clearing shortly thereafter).
- Teams are required to remain at the facility until either the sixty (60) minute maximum delay period has expired (or any mutually agreed extension) or the referees officially abandon the match. If a team departs prior to the expiration of the delay period and play is later deemed safe to resume within that period, that team shall be deemed to have forfeited the match (recorded as a 3–0 loss).
- If a match is suspended before the completion of the first half and cannot be resumed within the sixty (60) minute maximum delay period (or any mutually agreed extension), it must be rescheduled in consultation with the League. If abandonment occurs under subsection (e), the opposing team shall be awarded a 3–0 forfeit win.

1.12.6 Authority for Final Decisions: In all cases, the final determination regarding incomplete games, rescheduling, forfeits, or sanctions rests with the Florida Cup Committee and FCL Staff

## **Section 2: Rosters**

### **2.1 – Player Registration**

All players shall be registered according to US Club Soccer rules.

### **2.2 – FCL Florida Cup Juniors Official Team Roster**

Each team must create their official FCL Florida Cup Juniors Roster on their team's GotSport online account. Rosters will be capped at 26 players, and once frozen, teams may only use players off this 26-player roster. Roster freeze will occur 5 days prior to the event.

### **2.3 – Game Roster**

Only players who are listed on the official GotSport match report will be eligible to play in FCL Florida Cup Juniors matches. Player's names may not be handwritten on the FCL Florida Cup match report from GotSport (unless specifically approved and written in by FCL staff). If any player is not listed on the FCL match report, he/she must be added electronically to the match report before the player is eligible to play. Any players not appearing in the match must be stricken from the match report.

*For Clarification: up to 26 players may be listed on the official FCL event roster but only 16 players for U8-12 (18 for U12 playing 11v11) may be used in any match. No player shall appear on more than one game match report for the entirety of the event.*

### **2.4 – US Club Soccer Player Pass**

All players and coaches must present their US Club Player Identification Card to the referee prior to the match. If the individual picture is not on the ID card and the card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

### **2.5 – Guest Players**

No Guest Players will be allowed.

### **2.6 – Illegal Players**

Any player who does not appear on the official FCL match report from GotSport and does not have a valid US Club Soccer player pass issued by the same club shall be considered an illegal player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal player shall forfeit the game, the coach of the team using the illegal player will be suspended from the Florida Club Leagues and all of its events for one year, and the club of the illegal player will incur a \$500 fine.

### **2.7 – “Cup Tied”**

Players may only compete for one team per age group in the FCL Florida Cup Juniors. Once a player plays for a specific team that player is “Cup Tied” for the entirety of the event.

## **2.8 – Emergency Player Rule**

Teams that drop below 8 players for U11-U12 and 6 players for U8-U10 may request, from the Florida Club League, the ability to add players that were registered with their club prior to the roster freeze date, but were not on the Florida Cup Juniors roster. This rule may also be used to add a goalkeeper. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Florida Club League.

## **Section 3: Game Day Procedures**

### **3.1 - Pre-Game Procedures**

Home Team Responsibilities

- Provide referees with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official.

Visiting team responsibilities:

- Provide referee with current year US Club Soccer player passes for each player and team official

### **3.2 - Personnel on the bench**

A maximum of 3 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a US Club pass in order to sit in the technical area. It is recommended that teams have several credentialed coaches or managers with passes for the team just in case something happens to the head coach. A US Club pass makes a person eligible to coach any team in the club for which that coach or manager is credentialed.

### **3.3 - Spectator and Sideline Behavior**

All spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a positive playing environment. The following apply:

Respect for Officials and Participants: Spectators must not use abusive, threatening, or confrontational language or gestures toward referees, players, coaches, or other spectators.

Sideline Location: Spectators must remain on the opposite side of the field from the team benches unless the facility layout requires otherwise.

Referee Authority: Referees have ultimate authority to address spectator or sideline misconduct. Referees may stop play, remove individuals, or terminate the match if they determine spectator behavior is disruptive, unsafe, or abusive.

Coach Responsibility: Each team's coach is responsible for the conduct of their spectators. Failure to control sideline behavior may result in the referee suspending play, terminating the match, or reporting misconduct to Florida Cup Staff.

Sanctions: Teams whose spectators engage in misconduct may be subject to sanctions, including warnings, forfeiture of the match, removal from the competition, or fines at the discretion of Florida Cup Staff.

### **3.4 – Jersey Conflict**

If there is a conflict in jersey colors, it is the AWAY team’s responsibility to change colors. The HOME team will have the right to choose the uniform color they will wear. It is implied that the home color is the “light” color.

### **3.4 – Referee Fees**

Each team is responsible for ½ of the referee fees for group stage games (3 games). Fees will be invoiced to teams. FCL will cover all Referee Fees for the Finals.

U8-10 = \$25 per team/game = \$75

U11-12 = \$70 per team/game = \$210

U12 (11v11) = \$100 per team/game = \$300

## **Section 4: Applications, Deadlines & Withdraws Competition Announcements**

### **4.1. Application**

Must be completed in GotSport, in its entirety with payment by the application due date. Teams not completing payment may be removed from the tournament.

### **4.2 Withdrawals & Fines**

Notice of the intent to withdraw must be made to the Tournament Director. A team that withdraws its application at any time will forfeit its entry fee. A team that withdraws or is declared ineligible will be subject to the following additional penalties.

1. After groups are named and at any time during the competition: the team shall forfeit its entry fee
2. Cancellations with less than 96 hours' notice - \$250

Any team who does not complete payment within 30 days will be subject to a late fee of 15%.

### **4.3 Forfeits**

A forfeit during the competition shall be considered a withdrawal and be subject to the appropriate fines and penalties.

Should a team in round-robin competition forfeit any match, official game scores for all of that team's games shall be recorded as 4-0 losses. A team that forfeits a match will be considered to have withdrawn from the tournament.