



STANDARDS & RULES
2023-2024



LEAGUE STANDARDS

- ★ These standards will be modified from year to year but are in place to preserve the quality of the league.
- ★ The standards will be reviewed and approved annually by the National Chair, League Manager, and Technical Advisory Group
- ★ We will need to set the standard and then be the standard.
- ★ With standards comes accountability and oversight. We have hired a standards commissioner to oversee and implement fines, protocols, and governance to maintain the standards that allow the league to be a top national platform.
- ★ The standards that are defined below will have a clear consequence if not followed.



Technical Standards & Governance Model ELITE ACADEMY LEAGUE (EA)

STRUCTURE		
STANDARD AREA	STANDARD	EXPLANATION
Age Group Structure	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19 age groups	<p>U11 and U12 will be optional for EA Clubs and determined by individual conferences if desired.</p> <p>U13-U19 mandatory for EA Clubs with some markets accepting clubs with less teams to mature that division.</p>
Competition Format	All teams play home and Away within division and some divisions will have cross conference games (Scheduled games September – May)	<p>Neutral central sites for specific clubs to limit overall player and family travel within division</p> <p>Showcases will be cross over divisions playing teams in other divisions. These matches will count towards league standings.</p>
Roster Maximum	<p>Roster maximum of 20 players, 14 players max on game day roster</p> <p>Roster maximum of 30 players, 18 players max on game day roster</p>	<p>U11-U12</p> <p>U13-U19</p>
Competition Format	A League break for High School season based on each Division's high school season	
Match Format	Two 45-minute halves with a 15- minute half time	U16, U17, U19
Match Format	Two 40-minute halves with 15-minute half time	U14, U15
Match Format	Two 35-minute halves with 10-minute half time	U13
Match Format	Two 30-minute halves with 10-minute half time	U11 & U12
Match Scheduling Standards	A specific framework should be provided by league regarding order matches	Agreed that all would play youngest to oldest on a given play date.



Technical Standards & Governance Model ELITE ACADEMY LEAGUE (EA)

Match Schedule Standards	A framework establishing an allowable time frame for matches to be scheduled during a given day must be followed.	* See Scheduling section for more info
Match Day Standards	30 minutes of warm-up time on the match field is recommended prior to the start a match	Scheduling guidelines should be reflective of this standard as well as provision for extenuating circumstances.
Match Day Standards	Host clubs are required to provide team benches with EA branded canopies in technical area for home and away teams	Required
Match Day Standards	Host clubs are required to provide hydration center with water and cups	Recommended
Match Day Standards	Host clubs are required to secure a turf field, either as a primary or back-up, to ensure ability to host opponents in case of inclement weather.	Recommended
Match Day Standards	Host clubs are required to provide certified ATC or medical personnel prior to the start of any official league match	Required as of 1.1.23
Substitution Standards	Matches in the U13-U19 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. There shall be a maximum of 3 moments to make seven (7) substitutions in any half or in overtime of any Elite Academy League Competition.	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19
Substitution Standards	Free Subs	U11,U12
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS		
Player Development Standards	Clubs are recommended to hold a minimum of three (3) training sessions per week during the season.	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19
Player Development Standards	Each team is expected to be provided at least one (1) day of rest per week during the season.	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19



Technical Standards & Governance Model ELITE ACADEMY LEAGUE (EA)

Player Development Standards	A player can only compete in one (1) game per day with the exception of the goalkeeper.	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19 U11 and U12 players can play in multiple games in a day.
Player Development Standards	Teams/players play one game per weekend.	Recommended one game per weekend but limited exceptions to allow and limit daily travel of a 2-game weekend
Player Development Standards	Teams are permitted to participate in other showcases/tournaments; however, the league must take priority in case of any conflict.	Required to hold to the schedule once it is finalized.
STAFFING STANDARDS		
Staffing Standards	Licensing certification in 1 st year	Academy Director: A or B USSF License or accredited foreign equivalent Head Coach C License or foreign equivalent EA will request status by August 30th.
GOVERNANCE STANDARDS		
Governance Standards	EA Technical Advisory Group consists of at least 1 rep from each conference/division. This group helps steer the overall league with Technical Standards and Rules and Regulations.	The club Academy Director will be the main point of contact for all disciplinary and technical matters for the league.
Governance Standards	EA National Committee- Group of people to help oversee the vision and lead the league in the direction that best serves the clubs.	To present/support any administrative issues/updates/support to Technical Advisory Group
Governance Standards	A US Soccer Technical representative is welcome to be part of the group	Help monitor and advise group on agreed league technical principles and standards
Governance Standards	A performance bond is required from each club to participate and all fines will be taken out of this. It is required that a club always has the required bond amount in the account.	



Each club understands that EA will make the final determination if the Club is meeting the technical standards of the EA.

GENERAL

Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, all the Elite Academy League competitions shall be played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game in force at the time of competition as provided by the International Football Association Board.

Member clubs are required to comply with these regulations, and in addition, member clubs are encouraged to report pertinent situations to the league staff, which appear to be in non-compliance with the league requirements. Reporting non-compliance on the part of other clubs should not be viewed as a negative, but rather as a positive attempt to maintain consistent standards that ensure professionalism and fairness, both on and off the field.

All member clubs are required to adhere to the league requirements. The league reserves the right to decide how to enforce these requirements. Should a member club be found in violation of any of the requirements outlined in this document, their standing as a member club may be jeopardized. The penalties vary based on the type and frequency of the infraction, and may result in denied participation in specific competitions and programming.

League and Team Fees for the season must be paid in full by August 1st.

CONDUCT

Each member club shall be responsible for the conduct of its players, representatives and members at all times as related to all aspects of the league and agree to abide by the FIFA Code of Conduct.

TRAINING AND GAME EXPECTATIONS

1. Member clubs are responsible for adhering to all game day policies and procedures outlined and explained in the EA Technical Framework.
2. Member clubs should make efforts to acquire the best facilities possible. Member clubs must train and play home league games within reasonable geographic proximity to their club's home location unless approved by the league.
3. If a club is unable to provide a home field that meets minimum standards, the club may be required to find an alternate location or may lose the right to host games.



PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION

1. Registration: All registration will be completed via USSSA through GotSport. The league manager will distribute instructions to each member annually.
2. League staff shall have the authority to establish additional procedures, including deadlines, for registration of players.
3. All club staff members and trainers must complete the online registration process through USSSA, by completing Safesport Certification, background check and completing a signed waiver

ROSTERS

1. General
 - a. Each member is required to submit an initial roster by **August 15** of each seasonal year (**U13-U19 - 14 approved Players, 1 approved Coach, U11-U12 - 12 Approved Players, 1 approved Coach**)
 - b. Rosters will remain open until April 17th of each seasonal year, in which rosters will freeze for any team that has qualified for playoffs. Within a club, if a younger team doesn't qualify for playoffs, the older team can pull up a max of 5 players from a younger roster to be part of the 18-player Match Day roster for playoffs.
2. Player Transfers (only applies to EA players, moving to an EA team in a different club)
 - a. May occur with the approval of directors of both clubs and the academy director. Players transferring from one club to another shall not compete against the transferring club except in playoffs, once the regular season is complete. Without both clubs approval, the player is not eligible to compete in the EA for another club that season.
3. Roster Size
 - a. The maximum roster size on a Team's Roster is 20-30 depending on age group.
4. Match Roster Size
 - a. For U13 through U19 matches, only 18 players from the roster will be eligible to participate in each match, and these players must be add the the Digital Match Roster (DMR) in Modular11 with correct jersey numbers for the Referee to confirm eligibility.
 - b. The bench and technical area is reserved for players and a maximum of five (5) registered club staff members, not including a registered Health Care Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC).



5. Digital Match Rosters (Official Match Day Roster)
 - a. The official match day roster will be created in Modular11 for the Referee(s) to have access
 - b. It is the responsibility of the Referee to submit the Match Report, which is expected the same day as the Match has played.
 - c. You will receive suspension notification for any Players or Staff through Modular11 by wednesday following a weekend. For clarity, when Staff members are suspended, they are suspended by full club fixtures, NOT team specific matches.

6. Eligible Player
 - a. Players listed on the roster must meet the age requirement for their team, have paid the registration fee and have supplied proof of their age to the club staff in the form of a birth certificate or passport, waiver & medical release must be properly registered with USSSA/EA and not be subject to suspension.
 - b. Players can only be approved and made eligible by club registrars and/or staff.
 - c. All players must be registered to the club in the league system and approved by the league manager/staff.

2022-2023 Elite Academy League

GROUP ELIGIBILITY

U11 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2013

U12 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2012

U13 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2011

U14 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2010

U15 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2009

U16 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2008

U17 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2007

U19 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2006 & 1/1/2005

Note: Players may play for their own age group and for "older" age groups.

7. Ineligible Player
 - a. Players not listed on the roster or any player listed on the roster but not eligible to play, due to reasons such as missing registration forms, awaiting international clearance, serving a league suspension or not on the official digital match roster (DMR) shall be considered an ineligible player.



- b. Any member club using an ineligible player during any competition may be subject to a fine as determined by the league and a forfeit (by a 0-3 margin) of any match(es) in which the ineligible player participated.

LEAGUE SCHEDULE

League schedules will be organized by EA League Manager with feedback from clubs and with each club having the ability to alter their schedule according to club needs. The benefit to club members is ease of staffing and administration of teams. All regular season conference matches must be completed prior to May 14 to ensure proper determination of postseason qualifiers for the EA National Championship Playoffs.. Cancellations of match(es) not impacting the Playoffs must be approved by and are at the discretion of the league.

LEAGUE RESCHEDULES

Following the mutually agreed upon postponement of a league match, the following mandatory items must be included in the communication for the reschedule to be accepted by league manager:

1. Match Change Request via Modular11, created by the home team and ACCEPTED by the away team (note - time expiration or the away team not taking timely action will result in a denied request by the league staff)
2. Time and Location must be added ASAP
3. Once approved by the league staff, the host club is required to communicate the new fixture/match times to appropriate match day officials (referees, trainers, cameraman, etc.)

***Same-day weather cancellations (Acts of God, etc.) of league matches will be considered postponed and the same expectations will apply.



LEAGUE MATCH FORFEITS

A match will be determined as forfeited when one team does not show up for a mutually agreed upon fixture (date, time, and location) without proper documented notification (via email) and agreement with the other club or there is an instance when a team is found to have broken one of league rules, policies or procedures. The instances of forfeiture include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of an ineligible player (not on DMR, DOB, etc.)
2. Lack of digital match roster (DMR) created prior to match
3. More than one re-entry of substituted player in the same half of a match

In cases of match forfeiture, the score shall be 3-0 in favor of the non-forfeiting team. Teams forfeiting matches are at risk of being denied participation in the playoffs, however the final determination of eligibility will be made by the league.

SHOWCASE EVENTS

1. All Showcase Events are required for league participation:
 - a. Two National Events for U15-U17 that will have crossover matches counting towards league standings
 - b. One National Event for U19 that will have crossover matches counting towards league standings.
 - c. One Regional showcase for U13-U14 that will have crossover matches counting toward league standings

PLAYOFF FORMAT

-16 teams per age group

- **8 conference winners**, will be seeded 1-8, based on PPM from national standings will automatically qualify for EA National Championship
- Seeds 8-16 will be determined by teams with the next highest PPM from the national standings with the following representation from each conference: Northwest Norcal (1 team), Southwest (2 teams), Southwest Desert (1), Midwest (1), Mid-America (2), and Southeast (1)



- Day #1: 1v16, 2v15, 3v14, 4v13 etc. Winners advance to quarterfinals. Losing teams go to the consolation bracket
- Day #2: Quarterfinals and consolation matches
- Day #3: Semifinals and consolation matches
- Day #4: Finals; all teams guaranteed three matches and teams that make final play a 4th

GOVERNING BODY OF THE ELITE ACADEMY LEAGUE

USSSA through GotSport.

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Elite Academy League coaches must, at all times, treat players with respect and dignity.
2. Elite Academy League coaches must treat referees and match officials, at all times, with respect and dignity.
3. Elite Academy League coaches must treat the opposing coaches, at all times, with respect and dignity.
4. Elite Academy League coaches must treat spectators, at all times, with respect and dignity.
5. Elite Academy League coaches are expected to dress professional, in proper athletic apparel and shoes, at all Elite Academy League competitions.
6. Elite Academy League coaches must not discriminate against players based upon race, nationality, religion or sexual orientation.

LAWS OF THE GAME, DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, DISPUTES, PROTESTS & APPEALS

1. Laws of the Game

- a. Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, all matches shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game in force at the time of the competition and as laid down by the International Football Association Board. In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, the English version shall be authoritative.



2. Disciplinary Matters

- a. Disciplinary incidents are dealt with by the league Commissioner and technical committee
- b. The Players and member Clubs participating in the EA agree to comply with the Laws of the Game, the USSF Bylaws and Policies, these Regulations and the Disciplinary Code. The Players, Coaches, Representatives and Clubs agree to comply with all further directives regarding the EA.

3. Disputes

- a. Parties shall try to resolve all disputes in connection with the EA by negotiation. In compliance with USSF Bylaw 707, member clubs, players and other officials may not take disputes to an ordinary court of law. If a decision is subject to appeal, it shall be submitted to the jurisdiction of the league Commissioner.

4. Protest & Appeals

a. Overview

For the purpose of these regulations, protests are objections of any kind related to events or matters that have a direct effect on matches, including, but not limited to, the eligibility of players, the state of the field, accessory match equipment, crowd behavior and stadium installations.

b. Time

Unless otherwise stipulated in this article, protests shall be submitted in writing to the league Commissioner and board of directors within 12 hours of the conclusion of the match in question and followed up immediately with a full written report, including a copy of the original protest, to be sent in writing to the EA; otherwise they will be disregarded.

c. Eligibility

Protests regarding the eligibility of players for matches shall be submitted in writing to the league Administrator no later than 24 hours after the match.

d. Field Conditions

Protests regarding the state of the field, its surroundings, markings or accessory items (e.g. goals, flag posts or soccer balls) shall be made in writing to the referee before the start of the match by the coach or administrator lodging the protest. The league Administrator must also be notified of the protest prior to kick-off.



If the field's playing surface becomes unplayable during a match, the referee shall consult the league contact and both parties shall have the joint right to determine whether to delay, postpone or cancel the match.

e. After a Match

Protests against any incidents that occur during the course of a match shall be made to the league Administrator immediately following the completion of the match

f. Referee's Decisions

No protests may be made about the referee's decisions regarding facts connected with a match result. Such decisions are final.

g. Frivolous Protests

If an unfounded or irresponsible protest is lodged, the EA may dismiss the protest.

h. Match Fixing Policy

The EA prohibits match fixing of any kind.

STANDINGS

The standings in the Elite Academy League shall be determined at the end of the Elite Academy League Regular Season.

1. Points Per Match (points/matches played)

In each Elite Academy League Competition during the Elite Academy League Regular Season and the Elite Academy League Playoffs, teams shall be awarded three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. A forfeit shall be considered a 3-0 loss for the forfeiting team and a 3-0 win for the non-forfeiting team.

2. Tie Breakers

In the event that two teams are tied in (points per match) ppm upon the completion of the Elite Academy League Competition, the following will apply.

- a. Head to Head Results
- b. Head to Head Goal Differential
- c. Full Season Goal Differential up to 4 per game
- d. Least Goals Allowed
- e. Most Goals Scored
- f. Coin toss



HEAD INJURY

Any player suspected of suffering a head injury may be substituted for an evaluation without the substitution counting against the team's total number of allowed substitutions during the match.

1. If the club has used all their subs and/or moments when head-injury occurs, they will still be allowed to make a temporary substitute, bringing on a player that was previously subbed for.
2. If the player is deemed by the HCP or ATC to not have suffered a concussion, the player may re-enter the match at any stoppage of play and must replace the original substitute; this head injury evaluation substitution will not count as a used substitution.
3. Furthermore, the temporary substitute will be able to re-enter the match at a later time, if they had not previously played in that half.

SCHEDULING

1. No matches shall be scheduled prior to 9:00 AM unless visiting club agrees
2. All matches must be scheduled to end at least 30 minutes prior to sunset, unless lights are provided and the visiting club agrees to later start time.
3. All clubs are expected to schedule matches with professionalism and goodwill, meaning not to place any club at a competitive advantage or disadvantage.
4. All matches played on the same day are expected to be played at the same facility, unless the visiting club agrees to multiple facilities being utilized.

Match DAY

Match Jerseys

Home team wears light color uniforms and the visiting team will wear dark contrasting uniforms. If it's a double-fixture weekend, on the first day, the home clubs will wear light colored with away clubs wearing dark colors. On the second day, the home clubs will wear dark colored while the away club will wear light colored.

Match Field

The match field provided for Elite Academy League matches must be of highest quality in the geographic area. Turf or natural surface are both acceptable.

Note: If inclement weather is expected during an Elite Academy League match weekend, it is expected for member clubs to have a turf field back-up.



Home Team Field Setup

1. Team sideline requires both the home and away team have adequate benches
2. Team sideline requires both teams to have matching EA Branded team tents.
3. Team sideline requires a minimum of (1) trash can
4. Team sideline recommends a minimum of (1) table providing both water or sports drink.
5. All match fields are marked properly in accordance to the FIFA rules
6. All match fields must have (4) matching corner flags
7. (3) match balls must be provided at each Elite Academy League match.

Facility

Each Elite Academy League facility must have permanent or portable restrooms on site and available to players and spectators.

Athletic Trainer

An athletic trainer is **REQUIRED** to be provided for all matches, beginning approximately (1) hour prior to the first match and continuing until the end of the final match. **This individual will attend to all Players, Staff, and Referees participating in the match.**

Referees

Referee fees will be paid for by the home team.

Video

Mandatory requirement for all Elite Academy League matches U15 and above to film and upload to HUDL League Exchange within 48 hours of the match.

Away Game Experience Report

Following a Match Day, please have an EA Director or EA Admin fill out the [EA Away Game Experience Report](#) for standards feedback. This is completed one time per match day for all matches played. The EA is committed to League Standards and preserving the quality of the league as we go into the 2022/23 season.

All member clubs are required to adhere to the league requirements. The league reserves the right to decide how to enforce these requirements. Should a member club be found in violation of any of the requirements outlined in this document, their standing as a member club may be jeopardized. The penalties vary based on the type and frequency of the infraction, and may result in denied participation in specific competitions and programming.



FINES FOR VIOLATING STANDARDS

All fines will be deducted from the performance bond. If any amount is deducted from the Performance bond it will need to be replenished and always current. Any delay in payment will result in the team not being able to play until all is resolved.

Match Day/League Match Fines:

If you do not field a team for a league match and forfeit: **\$500 Fine**

Ineligible player: **\$500 Fine**

Film not done on match day: **\$300**

Film not uploaded: **\$100 per match**

No Canopies on match day: **\$200**

No team Benches: **\$200**

Showcases:

If you do not field a team for a showcase: **\$1500**

Forfeit a match at National Showcase: **\$500**

Fighting:

No Fighting acceptable on any level/ Zero tolerance

A player that strikes another player will be banned from the EA league permanently

A team consisting of 5 or more players that fight with another team will be removed from the EA League and the club fined: \$3000 due within 7 days of the incident.



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