NVSC/NPSC Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament 2026 Rules

1. ELIGIBILITY

Participation is open to U9-U19 Boys and Girls Travel Teams of 22 or fewer players (U9-U10 no more than 12 players and U11- U12 teams may have no more than 16 players on their roster) registered with a National State Association affiliated with USYSA/USSF or US Club Soccer or national equivalent and must present a valid State or Provincial roster. Teams that are members of organizations of the United States Soccer Federation but not members of US Youth Soccer (such as AYSO, SAY or US Club Soccer) DO NOT have to have a US Youth Soccer Application To Travel form (although that team's organization may require that the team have permission). Such a team roster does need to be provided to tournament officials, however, along with current passes from its organization and a current team roster.

Up to 5 carded guest players are permitted for U-9 through U-19. However, a team using guest players must have no more than the following roster sizes:

Roster Sizes:

- U9-U10 (7v7) teams are limited to a 12-player total roster.
- U11-U12 (9v9) teams are limited to a 16-player total roster.
- U13 through U19 teams are limited to a 22-player total roster, but must identify only 18 players before each game with the referees.

Guest players must be current USYS/USSF or national equivalent players whose team for which they are rostered is not participating in the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament.

2. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Team registration will be handled electronically. Complete instructions are available on the tournament website for online registration.

Necessary items for registration/check-in:

- The Official 2026/2027 team roster approved by your State Association with guest players written at the bottom
- Medical Release forms for each player including guest players
- Official Player cards including guest player cards.

All teams must have player cards, Tournament roster and Medical release forms available for review at each game.

Region 1 Policy Regarding Application To Host A Tournament

Region I have established the following policy concerning permission to travel when attending USYS sanctioned tournaments in Region I. The purpose of this policy is to make it as simple as possible for the US Youth Soccer Region I teams to travel to tournaments within Region I.

The new policy states that any USYS State Association teams within Region I that are accepted into a tournament in Region I do not need permission to travel papers. Permission to Travel is not required in friendly games within Region 1.

National/State Associations in Region I:

- Connecticut Jr. Soccer Assn Delaware Youth Soccer Assn
- Eastern New York Youth Soccer Assn Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Assn Soccer Maine
- Maryland Youth Soccer Assn Massachusetts Youth Soccer Assn New Hampshire Soccer Assn
- New Jersey Youth Soccer Assn
- New York State West Youth Soccer Assn Pennsylvania West State Soccer Assn Soccer Rhode Island
- Vermont Soccer Assn Virginia Youth Soccer Assn West Virginia Soccer Assn

Please Note: Each team's official roster, player passes, and medical release forms must be available for inspection prior to and for the duration of each game.

Teams that are members of organizations of the United States Soccer Federation but not members of US Youth Soccer (such as AYSO, SAY, US Club Soccer or Super Y Leagues) DO NOT have to have a US Youth Soccer Application To Travel form (although that team's organization may require that the team have permission). An approved team roster does need to be provided to tournament officials, along with current player passes from its organization.

3. CONDUCT/DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

RED CARDS

Any player or coach who receives a red card will be sent-off from that game and is prohibited from participating in the team's next tournament game. Note that a player or coach may receive more than a one-game suspension for a Red Card depending on the severity. The coach receiving the red card must be away from the field by at least 100 yards for the game they received the red card for and any other prohibited games they are suspended. This is also for the spectators causing the coach to be ejected will be subject to the 100 yard rule.

YELLOW CARDS

Any player or coach who receives one yellow card will be cautioned of the offense and allowed to

continue to play.

A second yellow card issued to a player or coach during any one game will count as a red card and the player or coach will be sent-off from the current game and be suspended from the team's next game.

PENALTY POINTS:

Regarding Tie-Breakers: a Yellow Card results in 1 penalty point, while a Red Card results in 3 penalty points.

CONDUCT - Coach, Player, Spectator

For both teams, players and coaches will take one side of the pitch. Supporters and spectators will take the other side of the pitch. The designated Site Coordinator will indicate to the referee and to the teams which sides will be designated for players/coaches and which is for spectators.

No coaches, players, or spectators are authorized within 18 yards of the end of the field and no one is permitted behind the end line. All spectators must remain behind the spectator's lines.

It is the responsibility of the team's coach or the person acting on the coach's behalf to control the conduct of the parents and other spectators. Failure to do so may result in a warning by the referee to the coach or the person acting on the coach's behalf. INAPPROPRIATE OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND MAY RESULT IN THE EJECTION OF THE COACH AND/OR SPECTATORS. If a coach is ejected from a game, it will be treated as a red card offense and that coach must leave the field area and go to the parking lot for the remainder of that game and may not be present at the following scheduled game.

If the ejected coach is coaching more than one team, that coach will be barred from all tournament sites until the team he/she was coaching, at the time of the ejection, has completed its next scheduled game. Spectators causing the coach to be ejected will be subject to the same penalties as the coach. If a coach has been ejected and there is no assistant coach, team manager or other team official, as listed on the roster to represent the team, the game will be ruled a forfeit and will stop at that time. All ejections will be reported in writing to the team's Club, League, and State Association.

NOISE MAKING DEVICES ARE NOT PERMITTED.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, ILLEGAL DRUGS, AND WEAPONS ARE NOT PERMITTED AT ANY TOURNAMENT SITE. ANY PLAYER, COACH, OR SPECTATOR FOUND IN POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, OR WEAPONS WILL BE BANNED FROM THE TOURNAMENT AND APPROPRIATE NOTIFICATIONS WILL BE MADE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES. SMOKING AND USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS IS PROHIBITED FROM THE GAME FIELD INCLUDING THE SIDELINES AND SPECTATOR AREAS.

HARASSMENT OF REFEREES AND/OR ASSISTANT REFEREES OR ANY VIOLENT OR ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR, OR FOUL LANGUAGE DIRECTED AT ANYONE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. PERSONS ENGAGING IN SUCH BEHAVIOR ARE LIABLE TO BE BANNED FROM THE TOURNAMENT AND ALL TOURNAMENT SITES BY TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS. TEAMS JUDGED GUILTY OF BEHAVIOR DETRIMENTAL TO THE TOURNAMENT WILL BE BARRED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR. A WRITTEN REPORT WILL BE FILED WITH THE VIRGINIA STATE ASSOCIATION AS WELL AS THE TEAM'S STATE ASSOCIATION, CLUB, AND LEAGUE.

The Tournament Director is the final arbiter of all disputes, arguments, and misunderstandings. His interpretations and decisions are in all cases final.

4. **GAME CHECK-IN TIME and ROSTER CHECKS**

Check-in time is 15 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off. A team representative must report to a Field Marshal at the field where the game is scheduled to make their presence known. Field Marshals will be identified as directed by the tournament director.

If a roster check is requested by a team for a game the roster check must be done before the start of the game. Both teams will be checked by the referee. Once the game is started no roster checks will be permitted.

5. **SITE MONITOR/FIELD MARSHALS**

During our tournament we will be relying on the Home team to provide a field marshal (recommend the team manager), their duties are light and are below. We will make our NVSC/NPSC teams home teams for all of their games to lighten the load on any other club teams.

Home Team Field Marshal Responsibilities

- Be the "cooler head" should sideline behavior become extreme
- Ensure the team spectators/parents observe the spectator line if there is one - do not allow parents on the "player/coach" side (except for team manager or substitute team manager)
- Be the first point of contact should the referee feel he/she needs help due to inappropriate sideline behavior

Each Site will have a designated Site Coordinator for overall management of the tournament execution. Please report any issues to the Site Coordinator for resolution. Any questions, contact the Site Coordinator at the Main Tent

6. **RULES OF PLAY**

Except as modified herein, the FIFA "Laws of the Game" will apply to all games. All teams will play 11v11, except U-8 - U-10 teams (7v7) and U-11 and U12 (9v9).

U9-10 Player Development Initiative Modifications - Build-Out Lines The Build-Out Line is a line extending from touchline to touchline halfway between the penalty area and the centerline. When the defending goalkeeper has the ball in hand or the defending team has been awarded a goal kick, the attacking team shall retreat behind the Build-Out Line until the ball is put back in play. Where a physical line is not present, the referee may mark the line with appropriate soft cones, pennies, or other markings placed off the field. The defending team is not required to wait until the attacking team retreats behind the Build-Out Line; indeed, some clubs will instruct their teams not to wait, choosing instead to force their players to play out of pressure. An attacking player shall not be deemed to be in an offside position if such player has not crossed the Build-Out Line at the time the ball is played.

No Punting/Dropkicks - If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense; if the punt or drop kick occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick will be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the offense occurred.

U11 and younger modifications – Whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. The proper restart depends upon whether the player deliberately played the ball with his or her head. If deliberate, the proper restart is an indirect free kick to the opposing team. If this 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 the play by the head is deemed inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.

7. FIELD AND GAME EQUIPMENT

Soccer shoes with metal cleats are prohibited; soccer shoes with toe cleats are prohibited.

Players must have a uniform jersey with a distinct number on the back matching their number on the team's official state roster.

When uniform colors are similar, the home team will change colors. The team listed first on the game schedule is the home team.

All players must wear shin guards completely covered by uniform socks in accordance with FIFA laws.

If not provided by the tournament, the designated home team must provide a game ball. Balls may be supplied by the tournament, at the discretion of the tournament committee. If the tournament game ball is lost, the designated home team is responsible for supplying a comparable game ball to the referee.

8. SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions will be unlimited and may be made, with the consent of the referee, at the following times:

- Prior to throw-in, by the team in possession or the opposing team if the team in possession is substituting
- Prior to a goal kick, by either team
- After a goal by either team
- In the event of an injury, when the referee stops play (one-for-one for the injured player(s))
- At half time

Under no circumstances may substitutions be made (1) on corner kicks or (2) after the game has ended in a tie and FIFA penalty kicks will be required to determine a winner.

9. DIVISIONS AND DIVISION STRUCTURE

Divisions: Every attempt will be made to make multiple divisions for all age groups.

protest

Divisions may be deleted, combined or added at the Tournament Committee's discretion. Division placement will determine the level of the team pool and will NOT be grounds for discussion or protest.

Division Structure: 4, 5, 6 or 8 Team Divisions

AGE GROUP	LENGTH OF HALVES	BALL SIZE
U9 - U10	25	4
U11 and U12	30	4
U13 - U19	30	5

Combining age groups may be necessary at the Tournament Committee's discretion.

All games will be played with a running clock. The referee is the official timekeeper and therefore all decisions regarding game duration are solely at the referee's discretion and shall not be protested.

All preliminary games will be played and decided in regulation time. No overtime periods or penalty kicks will be used to break a tie in preliminary round games. Half time shall be 5 minutes for all preliminary games.

Semi Finals and Finals ending in ties will be decided with penalty kicks in accordance with FIFA laws.

Where necessary to maintain the schedule, the NVSC/NPSC appointed site coordinator can adjust the length of game periods equally.

10. POINT SYSTEM and TIE BREAKERS

Points will be awarded as follows: three (3) points for a win; one (1) point for a tie and no (0) points for a loss.

Tie-breaker points will be awarded in the event of a tie within the bracket after the preliminary round with a maximum of five (5) points per game.

Tie-breaker points only come into play if there are multiple teams with the same record.

In the event of a tie within a bracket after preliminary rounds, the following tie-breaker system shall be used to determine group winners and group runner-up (if applicable):

Tie Breaker (in order, between two teams)

1. Winner of Head-to-Head Competition
2. Most Wins
3. Goals Against (least goals allowed, Max 5)
4. Goal differential. Goal differential points are awarded to a maximum of five (5) per game. The score used for the differential calculation is capped at a 5-goal difference. (Example: A score of 5-2 results in a differential of +3. A score of 8-0 results in a maximum differential of +5.)
5. Most Shutouts (shutout counted only in a victory, a 0 - 0 tie will not count)
6. Most goals scored, Max 5
7. Fewest Yellow and Red Card penalty points
8. FIFA Penalty Kicks

Tie Breaker (in order, between more than two teams)

1. Most Wins
2. Goals Against (least goals allowed, Max 5)
3. Goal differential. Goal differential points are awarded to a maximum of five (5) per game. The score used for the differential calculation is capped at a 5-goal difference. (Example: A score of 5-2 results in a differential of +3. A score of 8-0 results in a maximum differential of +5.)

4. Most Shutouts (shutout counted only in a victory, a 0 - 0 tie will not count)

5. Most goals scored, Max 5

6. Fewest Yellow and Red Card penalty points

7. FIFA Penalty Kicks

In the event of a three-way tie the tie-breaker sequences begin with “Most Wins”, and proceed in order down through the steps until the tie is broken, and the winner is determined. If a runner-up is needed then runner-up is determined by continuing through the steps. No steps are to be repeated or skipped.

If FIFA penalty kicks are required in a 3-way tie, there will be a draw by the Site Coordinator. The first team drawn will receive a bye; the next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team to determine the group winner. In this contest the bye team will be the home team.

11. FAILURE TO SHOW AND FORFEITS

A team shall be allowed a ten (10) minute grace period after the scheduled kick-offtime before the match is considered a forfeit. A minimum of seven players constitutes a team and if (7) players are present; the game will not be delayed.

The score of a forfeited preliminary game will be 3-0, awarding the winning team three (3) points for the win and four (4) goal differential points.

Any team forfeiting a preliminary game will not be eligible for advancing to semi-finals or final matches.

Forfeits of a semi-final or championship game shall be recorded as 1-0.

Any team forfeiting a championship game will not be entitled to individual trophies or team awards.

Failure to produce either duly authorized Player Registration Cards or an Official Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament Approved Team Roster to the appropriate Site Coordinator or Tournament Official thirty (30) minutes prior to scheduled game time is grounds for a forfeit. Playing a suspended player (a player receiving either a red card, two yellow cards in one game) in the game following the receipt of a red card is grounds for a forfeit.

Results for suspended games due to disciplinary reasons will be at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

12. GAME AND SCORE REPORTING

At the conclusion of the game, the Winning Team manager or if the game is tied, either team manager will get the Game Scorecard from the center referee, confirm the score and bring it back to the main site tent so the Site Coordinator can post. Please remember to not confront the referee during this game scorecard collection.

13. PROTESTS

THERE WILL BE NO PROTESTS. The decision of the Tournament Director, Site Coordinators and/or Tournament Committee are FINAL.

14. GENERAL

No items may be sold at tournament headquarters, playing fields, or adjacent/surrounding areas for the duration of the tournament unless specifically sanctioned by the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament Committee.

15. WITHDRAW POLICY

A team may withdraw from the Tournament for any reason 45 days prior to Tournament kick off with no penalty. If a team withdraws from the Tournament 30 to 44 days prior to the Tournament Kick-off, the team will receive a 50% rebate of Tournament fee. If a team decides to withdraw from the Tournament less than 30 days prior to Tournament Kick-off no refunds will be allowed. We will consider a full refund for teams that must withdraw for any reason that finds a fully paid replacement of equal team quality, as determined by the Tournament Director.

16. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the Tournament Director or official representative(s) will have the authority to:

Relocate or reschedule any game(s)

Change the duration of any game(s)

Cancel any preliminary game(s)

Consider any game terminated by game or Tournament Officials after one half of play as official as of the time of termination and the score stands at time of termination; and determine the format for advancement.

17. CANCELLATION POLICY and INSURANCE POLICY

The tournament will do its best to schedule three games for each team. However, at the Tournament Director's discretion, if the number of games are reduced, the tournament is not liable for any expenses and no refunds for the tournament application fees will be given. Under no circumstances whatsoever will the Virginia Youth Soccer Association, Inc., the Northern Virginia Soccer Club, the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament Committee, or any of their official representatives be responsible for any expenses (including the Tournament entry fee) incurred by any team.

For the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament, an option is available for teams to potentially receive a refund of their entry fee in case of weather-related cancellation or curtailment. Accepted teams/clubs can purchase an optional event cancellation insurance policy through US Sports Club Insurance (USSCI). This program is available via a partnership with GotSport.

Here are the key details about the event insurance program:

1. Purpose: It is an optional program designed to safeguard your team and its entry fees against unsafe weather conditions. Purchasing insurance is not required to participate in the tournament.
2. How to Purchase: The policy can be purchased directly from your team's GotSport account within the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament application.
3. Cost: The policy rate is a flat 10% of your specific age group entry fee. The Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament and NVSC/NPSC do not collect any of the insurance premiums or profits from policy sales.
4. Purchase Deadline: The policy must be purchased at least 15 days prior to the start of the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament weekend your team is participating in to be valid. Deadline for 2025 policy purchase is Sept 26th, 2025
5. Policies cannot be purchased after these dates, and without the policy, no refund will be given for weather-related cancellations.
6. Coverage: The policy covers unsafe weather-related conditions, including Heat, Rain, Ice, Snow, Hail, Smoke, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Earthquakes, and Unplayable Venues.

18. Refund Process with Insurance:

If the event is completely canceled before it starts due to covered weather conditions, your insured team will receive a 100% refund of the non-refundable registration fee.

If the tournament is partially canceled or curtailed after it has started due to covered weather conditions, the insured team will receive a prorated refund. Teams are guaranteed three (3) games, and each game is worth 33% of the entry fee. For any game missed, your insured team gets a 33% refund. Once a team has played their three guaranteed games, the event is considered complete from an insurance perspective, and they are not eligible for any type of refund.

The refunds are issued directly by USSCI, the insurance company, to the individual or organization that paid for the policy. The Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament or NVSC/NPSC will not be the issuer of these refunded entry fees.

Per USSCI, refunds for eligible teams are expected to be issued within three weeks of the conclusion of the Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament.

19. Important Refund Clarifications:

Teams that choose NOT to purchase the event cancellation insurance policy will NOT receive any monetary refunds of their entry fees should there be a weather-related cancellation or curtailment of the event.

Under no circumstances will the Tournament Committee, Tournament Director(s), The Hunt Country Fall Classic Tournament, or NVSC/NPSC be responsible for any expenses (such as hotel, travel, or food) incurred by any team due to an event or game cancellation, whether due to weather, COVID-19 (or similar pandemic), or otherwise.