

NAME

The Eastern District Players League (the Players League) is a fully sanctioned US Youth Soccer and South Texas Youth Soccer Association competitive league.

MISSION

To provide an opportunity for the most competitive play possible for Division I and Super 2 level teams within the Eastern District of South Texas Youth Soccer Association and to aid in the development of the competitive youth soccer player. The Players League will serve as the league which determines eligibility of participating teams for other South Texas Youth Soccer competitions (Directors Cup, Presidents Cup, State Cup, State Classic League, and US Youth Soccer Frontier Conference).

OWNER

South Texas Youth Soccer Association (STX Soccer)

MANAGEMENT

The Players League shall be managed by the assigned STX Soccer Program Manager (League Administrator) under the direction of the STX Soccer Eastern District Vice-President (EDVP) and guidance of the Players League Advisory Committee.

THE PLAYERS LEAGUE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Eastern District Players League shall maintain a standing committee of volunteer members tasked with providing feedback to the League Administrator regarding the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures for the Players League. The Players League Advisory Committee will serve as the body which reviews all Request for Consideration (RFC) Form submission and delivers a timely acceptance or denial for each.

THE PLAYERS LEAGUE DISCIPLINE AND PROTEST COMMITTEE

The Eastern District Players League shall maintain a standing committee of volunteer members tasked with the enforcement of any sanction for violations of league procedures, policies, and rules. The Players League D&P Committee shall deliver rulings on all game forfeits, protests, grievances, appeals and disciplinary matters within its jurisdiction.

SCHEDULE

Each team will play matches scheduled by the League Administrator. The Eastern District Players League Administrator will establish neutral play sites and the format of the competition.

FEES

Set by the STX Soccer Executive Committee.

LEAGUE RULES

The Players League is owned and operated by STX Soccer. Participation in the Players League is governed by the rules adopted by the United States Soccer Federation (US Soccer), US Youth Soccer (USYS), Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and South Texas Youth Soccer Association (STX Soccer) rules except where modified below.

SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFYING CRITERIA

1) Team Eligibility and Registration

- a) Participation of teams requires approval from the STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator.
- b) All registrations and payments must be received by the deadline dates established for each season.
- c) Roster continuity must be retained from the prior qualifying league. Roster continuity is defined as greater than 50% of your players must have been registered to your club for the 2023-2024 seasonal year.
- d) All teams must be properly registered with their local STX Soccer Member Association.
- e) All teams must be in good standing with the Players League, local STX Soccer Member Association, STX Soccer, USYSA, and the USSF.

2) Division I and Super 2 Qualifying Criteria

- a) The Players League Division I / Super 2 is **not** an open competition.
- b) Teams shall be in the 11U-19U age groups.
- c) The STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator will determine the teams qualified to participate in each age group prior to the start of league play.
- d) For age-groups with teams playing in divisions of only one (1) bracket, the level of play will be determined at the end of the Fall portion of the league season. To determine Spring Cup eligibility, teams in the top half of the bracket will be considered Division I while teams in the bottom half of the bracket will be considered Super 2.
- e) Should Qualifying Games be necessary, the STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator will determine dates of the Qualifying Games and any associated fees. Any fees shall be collected prior to the Qualifying Games.

3) Division II Qualifying Criteria

- a) The Players League Division II is an open competition.
- b) Teams shall be in the 11U-19U age groups.
- c) Teams are eligible to participate in STX Soccer championship events, including the Fall Championships in December and the South Texas Cup in the spring.
- d) Fall Championships allocation distribution will be determined by the number of brackets in each age group.
 - a. Age groups with four or more brackets will receive one (1) allocation per bracket. Age groups with three or fewer brackets will receive two (2) allocations per bracket. Single-bracket age groups will receive all four (4) allocations.

SECTION 2. FORMATION OF DIVISIONS

1) Supervision / Management

- a) Each age group in each division will be under the supervision of the EDVP and management of the League Administrator.

2) Age Groups

- a) Age Groups as defined by US Youth Soccer (i.e. 16U) will be divided into single birth year divisions whenever there are sufficient teams participating in the League.
- b) The League Administrator reserves the right to combine age groups when necessary.

3) Divisions

- a) The Division I level of play will be the “Division I” bracket.
- b) The Super 2 level of play will be the “Super 2”, and the “Super 2 Group A/B/C” brackets.
- c) The Division II level of play will be the “Division II”, and the “Division II A/B/C” brackets.

- d) Age groups with a single bracket in their level of play will compete under their respective bracket name through the Fall portion of the league season (e.g., Division I, Super 2 A/B/C, Division II North A/B/C, South, etc. or Division II A/B/C). Teams may be further sorted into updated brackets, as needed, for the Spring portion of the season, which may entail adjustment to bracket names and sizes to accommodate an equitable competition and number of games played per team.
- e) 11U and 12U bracket size and groupings will be determined by the EDVP and League Administrator.
- f) The STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator reserve the right to adjust bracket sizes according to teams registered for the current season.

SECTION 3. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

1) Scheduling

- a) The League Administrator will perform the required scheduling of each division for regular league play.
- b) Teams shall be required to play all scheduled dates as assigned by the League Administrator.
- c) Rainouts will be automatically rescheduled by the League Administrator.
- d) Teams may not cancel scheduled matches. Both teams will be fined and forfeit their match should they cancel or no-show. The League Administrator or the D&P Committee may also take disciplinary action.
- e) Schedule Changes and Rescheduling Requests:
 - i. All schedule changes or rescheduling requests must be made by a team representative at the pre-season Rescheduling Workshop. Any request made after this workshop is required to be made using the Reschedule Request Form and is subject to approval by the League Administrator.
 - a) Requests using the Reschedule Request Form must be submitted via the Online Form **a minimum of TEN (10) days** prior (Wednesday) to the originally scheduled weekend event.
 - 1. **Division I/Super 2:** The form's fee is \$50 for a request of ten (10) days or more prior to the originally scheduled weekend event. Requests are not guaranteed approval from the League Administrator.
 - 2. **Division I/Super 2:** The form's fee is \$100 for a request of nine (9) days until 5:00 PM of the Thursday prior to the originally scheduled weekend event. Requests are not guaranteed approval from the League Administrator.
 - (i) Requests received after 5:00 PM of the Thursday prior to the originally scheduled weekend will not be considered or reviewed. If the originally scheduled game is not attended, a referral to the Players League D&P Committee for consideration of possible fine and forfeiture may follow.
 - 3. **Division II:** The form's fee is \$15 for a request of ten (10) days or more prior to the originally scheduled weekend event. Requests are not guaranteed approval from the League Administrator.
 - (i) Requests received after 5:00 PM within the 10 days (Wednesday) prior to the originally scheduled weekend will not be considered or reviewed. If the originally scheduled game is not attended, a referral to the Players League D&P Committee for consideration of possible fine and forfeiture may follow.
 - ii. The team requesting the reschedule is required to acquire and pay for all costs associated with the field and referee crew of the game if the rescheduled game is to be played at a site that is not a designated the Players League neutral site.
 - iii. The team requesting the reschedule shall be charged the cost of the original game, should there be non-refundable costs (e.g., referee cost, referee assignor, field cost, etc.).

2) Qualifying Matches

- a) Qualifying matches are those scheduled league matches against teams in your own division.
- b) Only qualifying matches will be used to determine league standings.

3) Reporting of Scores

- a) All scores will be reported in accordance with the published Game-Day Procedures.

- b) In the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team shall notify the League Administrator within 48 hours of such forfeit. Failure to do so may result in additional sanctions.

4) Standings

- a) The team with the highest points will be judged the winner of the division. Points for each game will be awarded as follows:
 - i. Three (3) points for a win
 - ii. One (1) point for a tie
 - iii. Zero (0) points for a loss
- b) In the event two teams are tied on the basis of points the following tiebreakers will be considered in order until the tie is broken:
 - i. Winner of head-to-head competition (This criterion is not used if more than two teams are tied.) If head-to-head competition consists of more than one game (double round-robin), aggregate goals will be used to determine the head-to-head competition winner.
 - ii. Most wins
 - iii. Team with greatest net goal differential (NGD) which is computed as goals for minus goals against with a maximum – four (4) NGD in each game.
 - iv. Team with least goals against (there is NO limit on the number of goals that will be counted to determine this tiebreaker).
 - v. Team with the most goals (maximum of four goals in each game).
- c) In the event more than two teams are tied on the basis of points the following would be used to break the tie:
 - i. The sequence of tie breakers will begin with 3.4.b.ii and be followed until a team is eliminated.
 - ii. Once a team has been eliminated the sequence of tie breakers will begin again with 3.4.b.ii and be repeated starting over after each team is eliminated until only two teams remain.
 - iii. Once only two teams remain, the tiebreakers will begin again at 3.4.b.i.
- d) In the event that after having applied the tie breaker rules above teams remain tied the winner of a coin toss will be adjudged to have placed higher in the standings than the loser of the coin toss.

5) Promotion and Relegation

Promotion and relegation between State Classic League (SCL), the Players League (EDPL Division I, Super 2, and Division II), and USYS Frontier Conference competitive leagues will be based on the respective final league standings and on the number of teams participating in each age group.

- » 11U-14U league standings are final at the conclusion of the spring portion of games
- » 15U-19U league standings are final at the conclusion of the fall portion of games

PROMOTION

Promotion into the Players League: 11U

- » Teams interested in joining the Players League must complete the appropriate Request for Consideration (RFC) form within the published deadlines for the corresponding season.

Promotion into the Players League – Super 2: 12U-19U

- » A Division II team will get promoted to the lowest Players League Super 2 bracket for the following year if the team finishes in the top two of the highest bracket in Division II (Bracket A). Bracket placement will be determined by the number of registered teams in the current seasonal year.
 - Due to variance in bracket structures (i.e., Division II age groups that are divided into geographical brackets, specific promotion guidelines will be confirmed for age group's brackets and disseminated by the League Administrator prior to the end of the 2024 Fall EDPL season).

- » In the case of more than one bracket in a Level of Play, a team would be promoted to the next highest bracket level (Example: Super 2 Group C promotes to Super 2 Group B).

Promotion into the Players League – Division I: 12U-19U

- » A Super 2 team will get promoted to Division I for the following year if the team finishes in the top two of the highest bracket of Super 2 at the conclusion of the age-group's season.

Promotion into SCL – Division I: 14U

- » The Players League will provide up to four (4), 13U teams in each gender for placement in 14U SCL.

Promotion into SCL – Division I: 15U-19U

- » A Division I team will get promoted to the SCL bracket for the following seasonal year if the team finishes as the first (1st) team. An additional promotion slot may be issued pending the current seasonal year team counts.

Promotion into USYS Frontier Conference – Division I: 13U ONLY

- » The Players League will provide the top 3 teams from the highest bracket of Division I at the conclusions of the respective fall season for an opportunity to compete in a qualifying event against other top STX Soccer teams. This neutral site event will promote the top teams into the USYS Frontier Conference in the spring season of the current seasonal year.

Request For Consideration (RFC) Process: 12U – 19U

Twice each year, once in the Summer and once in the Winter, a Request for Consideration (RFC) form will be available for interested teams to enter the Players League or change their bracket of play within the league. The Players League Advisory Committee will review a completed form to potentially fill any open spot within the league. Groups may be expanded based on the final acceptance decision of the committee and the STX Soccer EDVP.

RELEGATION

Relegation within the Players League: 11U-19U

- » A Super 2 team will be relegated to Division II for the following year as determined by the STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator. Each team relegated to Division II will be notified prior to the following league season.
- » A Division I team will get relegated to Super 2 for the following year if the team finishes in the bottom two positions of the lowest Division I bracket at the conclusion of the age-group's season.
- » In the case of more than one bracket in a Level of Play, a team would be relegated to the next lowest bracket level (Example: Super 2 Group A relegates to Super 2 Group B).
- » SCL Teams will be relegated to the Players League Division I according to the published SCL rules.

Teams participating in the 19U age group in each respective season are to be considered aged out of the league at the end of the seasonal year. Any teams interested in remaining in the league should submit the appropriate Request for Consideration form for the following season.

SECTION 4. MATCHES

1) Dates / Times

- a) It is the intent to schedule one match per day.

2) Failure to Play as Scheduled

- a) Failure to play a match as scheduled will result in forfeiture of the match for league standings. The opposing team will be awarded a 4-0 win.
- b) Any team that forfeits a scheduled match will be subject to fines or additional sanctions as determined by the STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator. The STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator will determine if the match was willfully or purposefully forfeited.
- c) Any team which fails to play two or more officially scheduled games shall be considered to have abandoned the competition, be removed from the Players League for the current year, and not allowed to return for the following year. Games played will not count to determine league standings nor shall they be considered in the standings as forfeits. The team will not be eligible to receive awards, shall not advance from the league into other competitions nor be placed in the standings of the league. Final determination of penalties or sanctions will be made by the Appeals Committee.

SECTION 5. RULES OF PLAY

1) Games

- a) Games will be played under the applicable rules of US Youth Soccer and STX Soccer. Teams are responsible for obtaining and being familiar with the US Soccer Federation Official Administrative Handbook and the FIFA Laws as they govern League play with the modifications noted below.

2) Substitutions

- a) Substitution rules shall follow IFAB Laws of the Game Law 3, Section 3.

3) Match Length, Ball Size

Match length and ball size will be in accordance with the STX Soccer General Rules of Play.

- a) If age groups are combined, games will be played according to the rules of play of the oldest age group in the division.

| Age Group | Game Length | Ball Size |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| 11U, 12U | 30-minute halves | #4 |
| 13U, 14U | 35-minute halves | #5 |
| 15U, 16U | 40-minute halves | #5 |
| 17U, 18U, 19U | 45-minute halves | #5 |

4) Fields

Fields for all age groups must meet the size requirements as noted in the STX Soccer General Rules of Play.

5) Official Match

- a) A match shall be considered official after one full half of play (the second half does not have to start). If less than one half is completed and the match is called, the entire match must be replayed to become an official match.
- b) The STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator will decide the disposition of the match if called for gross misconduct by the team, coaches, or parents.
- c) Scheduled matches are to wait 10 minutes after the official start time of the match before a forfeit can be assessed.
- d) Failure to appear will result in a forfeit.

6) Player Passes

- a) Each team must be rostered in accordance with STX Soccer and local Member Association guidelines. Every player must be issued a player pass, which will serve as their official ID. Virtual cards in GotSport are an acceptable form of official ID.
- b) Prior to each game, each team must present their laminated and pictured US Youth Soccer player pass for each participating player, signed by an official of his or her current local Member Association. Virtual cards may be used if the player is properly rostered and has a photo uploaded to their account.
- c) If a team does not present its US Youth Soccer player passes or virtual cards prior to the end of the match, the opposing team will be awarded a 4 - 0 win. However, the match will not count as a forfeit for the losing team.

7) Rosters

- a) Match Day Roster Limits:
 - i. 13U-19U: 22 player roster; 18 players eligible for Match Day Roster.
 - ii. 11U-12U: 16 player roster; 16 players eligible for Match Day Roster.
- b) Each team should present an approved game day roster of no more than sixteen or eighteen players (16 or 18). Team players not on the Match Card may sit on the team bench in street clothing (i.e. not in uniform). Match Cards must be printed from GotSport.
- c) Only players who are listed on the official Match Card may participate in that game.
 - i. Any players not listed on the official Match Card may not participate in that game and will be deemed as an ineligible player.
- d) A copy of each teams' official roster must be made available to the opposing team coach/manager upon request.
- e) Each player is required to wear a team uniform with a number affixed to the back of the jersey. All players must have their jersey numbers entered into their GotSport event roster. Should there be a game day situation which creates a discrepancy caused by a change of jersey number; the discrepancy must be resolved by both coaches and the referee.
 - i. The referee's judgment regarding any other type of team color change is final.
- f) Playing of an ineligible player will result in automatic forfeiture of the match and possible suspension of the coach, possible expulsion of the team from the League with forfeiture of all bonds and fees, notification to the team's local STX Soccer Member Association, and review by the Appeals Committee for additional sanctions.

8) Club Pass

- a) In addition to the STX Soccer roster maximum, each team playing in the Players League may have a 'Club Pass Roster' that is approved by the League Administrator.
- b) A Club Pass Roster is an unlimited pool of players listed who are eligible for participation in the team's Players League matches. An eligible player is one who is properly rostered to a primary team that is from the same club (see 3.8 of the STX Soccer Administrative Handbook).
 - i. 13U – 19U: a maximum of 4 Club Pass Players may appear on the Match Day Roster.
 - ii. 11U – 12U: a maximum of 3 Club Pass Players may appear on the Match Day Roster.
 - iii. Club Pass players will count towards the Match Day Roster maximum of 16 or 18.
- c) A Club Pass Player may appear on multiple Club Pass Rosters.
- d) A Club Pass Player must play in the same, or higher, level competition (as defined in the STX Soccer Levels of Play) as his or her primary team.
 - i. A player may play down one level of competition but in the same age group (or in their true age group in the case of a play up) if the player is rehabilitating from a serious illness or injury.
 1. A serious injury or illness is one that requires verifiable medical treatment and required the player to have not participated in a game for a period of sixty (60) days or longer.
 2. Prior approval for a player to play down a level is required by STX Soccer Executive Committee.

- e) Players once listed on the Club Pass Roster may not be removed until the Players League season of play is concluded.
- f) A participating Players League team may list players on the Club Pass Roster at any time during the league season. Each Club Pass Player must be activated as Attending and added to the Match Day Roster in the GotSport system prior to the start of the game in which the player is to be used. Club Pass Players who do not appear printed on a Match Card will be considered ineligible players.
- g) A Players League player may participate in no more than two (2) official Players League scheduled matches in any given game day. The player may play with their Primary team and one additional team as an eligible club pass player given that player has been activated as Attending and added to the Match Day Roster in the GotSport system prior to the start of the game in which the club intends the player to be used as a club pass.
- h) Individual penalty points will accumulate jointly for all games played. Penalty point suspensions for the players must be served with the player's primary team and the player is ineligible to club pass until the suspension has been served. The player, coach (of both the primary and club pass team), and the coaching director of each club are responsible for monitoring and complying with STX Soccer's Progressive Disciplinary System.
- i) **NO GUEST PLAYERS ARE ALLOWED.** Only players who are properly registered with the same club and are listed on either the official state association roster or a player who is properly added to the Club Pass Roster are eligible to participate.
- j) Playing of an ineligible Club Pass player will result in automatic forfeiture of the match and possible suspension of the coach, possible expulsion of the team from the League with forfeiture of all bonds and fees, and notification to the team's local STX Soccer Member Association.

9) Other

a) Uniform Color Conflict

- » The team listed first on the schedule (home team) must wear their lighter colored jersey and socks.
- » The team listed second on the schedule (away team) must wear their darker colored jersey and socks.
- » When there is a conflict in uniform color, the team listed first on the schedule (home team) must change.
- » The referee's judgment regarding any other type of team color change is final.

b) Coaching from Sidelines

- » Limited coaching is permitted only from one touch line from the halfway line to the 18-yard line. If technical area lines are present, the team officials must remain within the established area.
- » Coaches may not enter the field without permission from the referee. Violation of this rule may result in a caution or ejection.

10) Inclement Weather

- a) Once the center referee has jurisdiction of a game, the game may be terminated only by the referee as provided by the FIFA "Laws of the Game".
- b) Each hosting association or club member is responsible for notifying the League Administrator, who will notify all participating teams as soon as possible if their fields are closed due to inclement weather.
- c) All reasonable efforts must be made to complete the match on the scheduled date.
- d) If a match is suspended for inclement weather, the match shall be considered official after one full half of play (the second half does not have to start). If less than one half is completed and the match is called, the entire match must be replayed to become an official match.
- e) The Players League will follow the STX Soccer "Inclement Weather Policy and Guidelines" and "Lightning Policy" unless a complex has a more restrictive policy.

SECTION 6. MATCH CONTROL / ON-SITE MANAGEMENT

1) Three-Person System

- a) Matches should be officiated by the three-person FIFA / USSF Referee System.
- b) If, because of unforeseen circumstances, a currently registered referee is unable to officiate or does not appear for an assigned match, a person may then be designated at match time to act as referee in an emergency for that one match. When neutral assistant referees are not assigned or fail to appear for a match as assigned, the match referee may seek the assistance of the club linesman whose duties shall be as delegated to them by the referee.

2) Termination of Matches

- a) Referees may abandon matches for lack of crowd control, poor team behavior or other unsportsmanlike circumstances. (Note – each coach is responsible for the behavior of their players. Each coach is responsible for assisting the official, when asked, in the control of parents, fans and spectators.)
- b) The Referee shall issue a written USSF Referee Report concerning the abandonment to the League Administrator within 48 hours of the end of the match.
- c) The STX Soccer EDVP and League Administrator shall ascertain the facts and determine appropriate disciplinary action.
- d) Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Reprimand
 - ii. Forfeiture
 - iii. Suspension from one or more matches or
 - iv. Recommendation of a more severe penalty

3) Site-Coordinator

- a) A site-coordinator will be on-site at each location where a volume of the Players League games are hosted. The site-coordinator is the official STX Soccer representative at the fields.
- b) The site-coordinator retains the authority, in consultation with the League Administrator, to act on the League Administrator's behalf, or on behalf of the STX Soccer EDVP.

SECTION 7. DISCIPLINE, PROTEST, GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

All Players League matches are subject to the STX Soccer Progressive Discipline System as defined in [STX Soccer Administrative Handbook \(section 4.9\)](#). The Players League D&P Committee will address any disciplinary action and/or protest matters.

Progressive Discipline and Suspension Summary

- a) When a player or coach accumulates three yellow cards throughout the season, the player or coach must sit out a minimum of one (1) game. Any sit-out MUST be noted on the game card in order to be valid.
- b) An immediate two-game suspension will be imposed for reports of Assault, Violent Conduct, Abusive Language, and Spitting (see STX Soccer Administrative Handbook 4.9.4)
- c) An immediate three-game suspension will be imposed for reports of Referee Abuse; and an immediate four-game suspension will be imposed if the referee is under 18 years of age (see STX Soccer Administrative Handbook 4.9.4)
- d) An Automatic Suspension from all STYSA, USYSA, or USSF sanctioned activity, including but not limited to games, practices, practice games, tournament play, or friendly games and a referral to the STYSA Appeals Committee will be imposed for reports of Referee Assault (see STX Soccer Administrative Handbook 4.9.4)

****APPENDIX****

- 1) These rules and policies may be temporarily modified when extenuating circumstances or justified compelling considerations exist by the Players League standing committees in accordance with guidance from the League Administrator.
- 2) Due to time and distance the Players League standing committees may conduct their business, including voting on league matters, via email or teleconference.
- 3) The Players League will host the Eastern Developmental Spring League (EDSL) each Spring. The EDSL will be an open competition for all interested 15U–19U teams who participated in the Fall 2024 seasons in the Players League (EDPL – Div. 1, Super 2, and Div. 2), State Classic League (SCL), or other leagues as approved by the League Administrator. All Players League Policies and Rules, Game Day Procedures, and Discipline & Protest Fines and Sanctions are applicable to teams participating in the EDSL except those amended below:
 - a. [EDSL Club Pass Policy and Guide](#)
- 4) [STX Soccer General Rules of Play](#)
- 5) [STX Soccer Inclement Weather Policy](#)
- 6) [STX Soccer Lightning Policy](#)
- 7) [Players League Advisory Committee Overview](#)
- 8) [Players League D&P Committee Overview](#)