



# FESTIVALS

COMPETITION RULES (Spring 2026)

*Last Updated 4/26/2026*



1. The Iowa Soccer USYS League America Festival offers recreational soccer players 8U through 15U an opportunity to play in a high-quality tournament in a fun atmosphere, where the emphasis is placed on participation, fun and competition.
2. The tournament is for Iowa Soccer members and non-member teams and players classified as "recreational". All teams must be registered with Iowa Soccer or another governing body during the season the tournament is being played (fall or spring). Player eligibility requires that each participant have a current seasonal-year Iowa Soccer-issued player pass, or a player pass from another governing body.
3. Additional Rostered Players

The additional roster player allowance is intended to help you fill your team and provide opportunities to players. The players should be from within your club/organization. We recommend you utilize players who are of like skill rather than seeking out those who may be further ahead with their soccer development.

- Regular-season maximum roster sizes apply.
- Teams may roster up to 5 additional players from within club/organization.
- Additional rosters players must have a current seasonal year player pass (see player eligibility above).
- Must be recreational registered players only (a.k.a. "recreational) and cannot also be classified as select players.
- These players may be written onto your team roster and submitted to the tournament director.
- Iowa Soccer officials will make the final determination of eligibility.

Iowa Soccer officials will verify all additional rostered players and make the final determination of their eligibility. In the event you are considering a player from outside your club/organization, please contact the tournament director for approval. Additional information may be required to be submitted for consideration and approval.

4. Depending on the number of teams entered in an age group, some age groups may be combined so that teams can still participate, rather than turning entries away. If combined, age group combinations would look only like: 7U-8U Girls or 7U-8U Boys; 9U-10U Girls or 9U-10U Boys; 11U-12U Girls or 11U-12U Boys, 13U-14U Girls or 13U-14U Boys, 14U-15U Girls or 14U-15U Boys. Girls would only be combined with girls and Boys would only be combined with Boys.
5. A player can only play for one (1) team. Any ineligible player discovered shall cause the teams on which he/she played for to forfeit any game. An exception may be made for a player playing in two different age divisions. Tournament Officials MUST clear this exception beforehand.



6. All member club teams must submit a state approved team roster or event roster within the deadline provided in event communications. State approved rosters include photos and therefore serve also as the player pass. In the event a team submits the non-picture state approved roster, they must also submit player cards for the team.

*a. If you have been playing all season without the state approved league roster (with photos) or not using player passes, contact your club’s registrar about obtaining them. There are no exceptions – no state approved pictured roster or no pass – no play!*

7. All Non-Member Club Teams must submit an approved roster from their USSF sanctioning body (ex: US Club, AYSO, USSA) within the deadline provided in event communications. If team roster does not include photos, they must also submit player cards for the teams.

8. Rosters and player passes are to be uploaded within the tournament platform **PlayMetrics** by the team admin. Copies of team rosters will be held by the tournament director throughout the event. All teams must have a hard copy or digital copy available of team roster and passes accessible throughout the event. Submission of the team roster will serve as the online check-in for each team. Officials will NOT be checking rosters/passes prior to each game. Officials will perform a brief equipment check, setting of expectations and confirming game format.

9. Any adult who intends to be on the sideline with the team during the match in the role of coach, assistant coach, team manager or otherwise, must be on the League America Festival roster. If the adult has properly registered with a club and passed Iowa Soccer’s Risk Management procedure, the adult is eligible to be on the League America’s roster. If you have been coaching all season without completing Iowa Soccer’s Risk Management procedure, you and your club are not in compliance and you must contact your registrar immediately about properly registering with the club, and then complete the background check procedure.

You will not be allowed on the team’s sideline during the League America Festival if you are not on the event roster. This is an issue of risk-management and there are no exceptions!

10. All teams must have a coach that is 21 years of age or older.

11. Except as noted herein, all games will be played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game.

12. Forms of the game & Game Length: If the minimum number of players cannot be fielded within ten (10) minutes after scheduled game time, then the team that cannot field the minimum number of players shall forfeit the match.

8U: 4v4	9-10U: 7v7	11-12U: 9v9	13-15U Small-Sided 7 v 7	13-15U: 11
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4x8 Minutes	2x20 Minutes	2x25 Minutes	2 x 25 Minutes	2x30 Minu
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### **NO HEADING – 8U-11U DIVISION**

No heading in U11 and younger age groups. If 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 line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infraction occurred.

- 8U games will be play with a maximum of four (4) players per side and a minimum of two (2) players per side. 4 v 4
  - **4 x 8 minute quarters (32 minutes)**
  - Build-Out Line:
    - League America Festival requires that the opponent “drops off” to the halfway line on all goal kicks to what is referred to as the “build-out line.” The defending team may not release from the half line until the goal kick has been played. Referees will be instructed to strictly enforce this rule. This rule is designed to encourage the development of building out of the back.
- 9U – 10U games will be played with a maximum of seven (7) players per side, and a minimum of four (4) players per side. 7v7
  - **2x20 minute halves, (40 minutes)**
  - Build-Out Line:
    - League America Festival requires that the opponent “drops off” to the halfway line on all goal kicks to what is referred to as the “build-out line.” The defending team may not release from the half line until the goal kick has been played. Referees will be instructed to strictly enforce this rule. This rule is designed to encourage the development of building out of the back.
  - Goalkeeper Distribution
    - Goalkeepers are NOT allowed to punt or drop-kick.
    - If a 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 should be taken



on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

- Referees must be flexible when enforcing the 6-second rule and counting the time of possession should only begin when all opposing players have moved behind the buildout line.
- Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build-out line. However, the goalkeeper is allowed to put the ball into play sooner, but he or she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.

- Offside:

- As per US Soccer mandates, the 9U-10U age groups will play with the offside law. The build-out line (half line) is the offside line.

- 11U – 12U games will be played with a maximum of nine (9) players per side, and a minimum of six (6) players per side. **9v9**

- **2x25 minute halves (50 minutes)**

- 13U – 15U Small-Sided games will be played with a maximum of (7) players per side, and a minimum of (4) players per side. **7v7**

- **2 x 25 minute halves (50 minutes)**

- Goalkeeper Distribution

- Goalkeepers are NOT allowed to punt or drop-kick.
- If a 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 should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

- 13U – 15U games will be played with a maximum of eleven (11) players per side and a minimum of seven (7) players per side. **11v11**

- **2x30 minute halves (60 minutes)**



- ***All games will have a continuous running clock. The time will only be stopped at the referee's discretion.***

13. Maximum roster size

- 7U – 8U is 8 players
- 9U – 10U is 14 players
- 11U – 12U is 18 players
- 13U-15U Small-Sided is 14 players
- 13U – 15U is 22 players; only 18 may be active/play in a given match and the 18 may change from match-to-match

14. Substitutions for all age groups will be unlimited. Teams, with the consent of the referee, may make substitutions at any stoppage of the game.

15. When possible, game balls will be provided by the tournament staff/officials. In the case a ball is not available each team shall identify a ball. The referee's choice of the game ball is final. 7U&U games will use a size 3 ball. 9U-12U games will use a size 4 ball. 13U-above will use a size 5 ball.

16. Playing Conditions. Teams will be expected to play according to the schedule of games regardless of weather conditions. Only the Tournament Director may reschedule games or alter the competitive format because of inclement weather or other just cause. Games shall be considered complete if one half has been completed and play is stopped by the referee or tournament officials. When necessitated by playing conditions, the game format may be altered to include shortened games, kicks from the mark, or coin tosses. If a game is decided by kicks from the mark, the winning team's score for that game will be recorded as 1-0.

17. The home team will get the choice to kick off or pick sides at the beginning of the game.

18. Each team should be prepared to provide another color uniform. It is the responsibility of the home team to change to a different color uniform or pinnies if necessary (the home team is always the first team listed on the schedule). The referee is the final authority on uniform colors. It is recommended to have at the minimum, white T-shirts available. For 10U-above, the primary uniform, at least, should have easily discernible numbers on the back. Secondary uniforms may be numberless but should only be worn if there is a color conflict.

19. Standings/Point System (Used in 9U-above games only):

- Win = 3 points
- Tie = 1 point
- Loss = 0 point



## 20. Team Divisions/Advancement

- 8U divisions emphasis is on participation and feature a festival style wherein, scores may be tracked; however, not posted and standings are not kept/posted, there is no “advancement” to championship games, no awards are given based upon standings and participation awards are given to individual players.
  - 8U division
    - 3 game guarantee
    - Games played on Saturday only.
- All 9U – above divisions
  - 3-game guarantee
  - Group play games (a.k.a. round-robin) may end in a tie; no overtime will be played during group play.
- In age divisions where there are four teams, all teams will play each other in round robin play. The top two teams will advance to championship game and medals provided to each (1<sup>st</sup>- Champion / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Finalist).
- In age divisions where there are five teams, all teams will play each other in round robin play. The two teams with the most points from round-robin play will be declared Champion (most points) and Finalist (second most points), respectively.
- In age divisions where there are six teams there will be two groups of three teams each. Two group games will be played, and one crossover group game to meet the 3-game guarantee. Group winners advance to championship game and medals provided to each (1<sup>st</sup>- Champion / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Finalist).
- In age divisions where there are eight teams, the teams will be divided into two groups with four teams each. Each team will play the other teams in their group. The top two teams will advance to championship game and medals provided to each (1<sup>st</sup>- Champion / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Finalist).
- Final matches must end with a winner. If matches are tied at the end of regulation in a semifinal or final, Kicks From the Mark (KFTM) will be used to determine a winner. The KFTM procedure is in Rule #22.

21. Tie Breakers. If any team has the same point total, the following will be used as a tiebreaker, in order.

1. Head-to-head competition (not used if more than 2 teams are tied).
2. Goals scored minus goals allowed (maximum of 5 goal differential per game, example - a score of 9-1 would be calculated as 6-1).



3. Most shutouts.
  4. Fewest goals allowed.
  5. Kicks from the mark.
22. In the event that Kicks From the Mark must be used to determine a winner, the format will be as follows:
- Each team will select five (5) players to kick. Only players on the field at the conclusion of the game may be selected to kick;
  - Teams will alternate (the first team to kick will be determined by the referee's coin toss)
  - If the score remains tied after five (5) kicks, the teams will alternate kicks with the remaining players that were on the field at the end of play, one at a time, until a winner is determined;
  - A team goalkeeper can be changed with the referee's permission after each shot.
23. Any team that withdraws from a match or fails to play a match will forfeit that game and the following game at a score of 3-0 for each game.
24. Following each match, the score of the match will be reported to the Administration Tent and published in PlayMetrics. The referees' decisions are final. There will be no protests and results/games will stand as played.
25. Any player who receives a red card will be expelled for the rest of the game and will be suspended from playing in the next scheduled game. Any coach that receives an expulsion from a game shall be expelled for the remainder of that game and the next game. **Any spectator that is expelled from a game shall not be allowed to be on the premises of the Spring Creek Sports Complex, including the parking lot, for the remainder of the tournament.**
26. Any person involved in a fight will be immediately expelled from the tournament area for the remainder of the tournament. Any coach or player expelled in this manner will not be allowed to participate during the remainder of the tournament.
27. Every player and coach is participating at his or her own risk.
28. All coaches are responsible for the conduct of their fans throughout the tournament. Abusive language and actions by spectators will not be tolerated. The referee has the authority to verbally warn, caution, or send away the team coaches for the conduct of the spectators.
29. Every team is requested to help ensure that the field and the surroundings are left clean and litter-free.
30. Alcohol in any form will not be allowed on any playing field, adjacent to the playing field or parking lot areas.



31. **Withdraw Policy.** The tournament will refund entry fees up to the date entry closes. After this period refund will be left to the discretion of the Tournament Director. After schedules are finalized there will be no refund of the entry fee if a team withdraws.
32. **Amendment to the Rules.** The Tournament Director and/or Tournament Committee have the right to modify these Rules as they deem to be necessary throughout the tournament.
33. **Decisions made by the Tournament Director are final.**
34. **Tournament Officials, field hosts and referees shall have the authority to remove any person from the tournament for unsporting conduct.**
35. **Cancellation/refund policy:** The Tournament Director shall have the full and final authority concerning the cancellation, delay, change of time, or any other alteration of games that may be required due to the weather or emergencies. If the tournament is canceled due to inclement weather, the following applies:
  - **No games played = % of entry fee.**
    - In the event of total cancellation prior to the start of the first scheduled game, the tournament will refund a % of the application fee based on the tournament expenses.
  - **1 game played = 50% of entry fee.**
  - **2 games played = 25% of entry fee.**
  - **3 games played or failure to play semi-final and/or final games = no refund.**
  - **If semi-final or final games are canceled, Champion and runner-up will be determined on points standing after preliminary games.**
36. **Weather:** The Tournament Director will make the decision to clear the field with the safety of all participants – players, fans, referees, tournament officials -- as the primary concern. It is not up to referees to make this decision.
  - **Multiple horn blasts, followed by referees blowing their whistles to stop play, will indicate play has been suspended.**
  - **When the Tournament Director has indicated play has been stopped via the horn blasts, participants are expected to seek shelter immediately inside their vehicles.**
  - **Do not leave the premises unless and/or until directed to do so by the Tournament Director or tournament officials. Communication will be between**



the Tournament Director and the contact listed on the team's entry, who is charged with relaying the information to his/her coach and team.

- Multiple horn blasts will indicate that play will resume and participants should return to the field they left when play was suspended.

If the delay is lengthy and significantly affects the remainder of the day's schedule, any decisions made regarding the schedule will be relayed by the Tournament Director to the contact person listed on the team's entry, who is then responsible for getting that information to his/her coach and team. Game lengths may be shortened. Tournament officials ask for and appreciate your patience and cooperation in weather situations.

37. Sportsmanship/For the Good of the Game Iowa Soccer tournament officials reserve the right to make certain decisions regarding the competition, as he/she deems necessary, for the good of the game, in order to improve the game and/or to protect the participants. Such decisions shall include but are not limited to: postponement or cancellation of games; rescheduling of games; changing of fields; changing of sites; fair play; unsporting behavior. In the interest of fair play and good sporting behavior, conduct by coaches, team officials and players that calls the game or competition into disrepute is prohibited. It is expected that all participants will participate in good faith and fairly. If it is determined that a particular action by a team or any of its players, coaches, team officials or spectators is deemed unacceptable for any reason, the team may be reprimanded, disqualified, sanctioned, and/or face forfeiture of one or more games. Examples of such action include but are not limited to: knowingly violating the Guest Player Allowance, suspected forfeiture or otherwise determining the outcome of a game with the design or purpose of controlling the advancement of any team from its own group or any other group, intentionally losing a game, or unnecessarily running a score up. To be clear, this is not an all inclusive list. Iowa Soccer tournament officials do not subscribe to the notion that that which is not expressly prohibited is, therefore, permitted.

**Updated (4/13/2026) - Roster size align with ISL rules**

**Updated (4/15/2026) – Roster / Player Pass upload**

**Updated (4/26/2026) – 13U-15U Small-Sided Rules, Team Divisions & Advancement**

