

Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association

2023-2024 Cup Policies and Guidelines

The Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Association (EPSA) will conduct State Cup competitions each year as part of the USASA Region 1 and/or National Cup competitions. The EPSA events will follow the policies and rules as set forth by this State organization, Region 1 and/or the USASA depending upon the specific Cup competition.

The following policies and guidelines are presented to provide the participants with the guidelines on how EPSA will administer its cup competitions. Most of the following sections deal with the detailed aspects of the competitions that are left to the discretion of each State Association.

In the event of a conflict with these guidelines and any Region 1 and/or USASA Cup Policies in effect at that time, the policies of the superior organization shall govern.

I. Entry Deadlines and Competitions

Listed below is the EPSA Board of Directors list of approved competitions and the entry deadlines for each of these for the 2023-2024 Cup season.

2023-2024 Cup Deadlines & Schedules

<u>Men's</u>	<u>Entry Deadline</u>	<u>Cup Draw</u>	<u>Tentative Competition Start</u>
Open	09/20/2023	9/22/2022	TBD
Amateur	09/20/2023	9/22/2023	10/15/2023
Over 30	1/5/2024	TBD	Spring 2024
Over 40	1/5/2024	TBD	Spring 2024
Over 50*	1/5/2024	TBD	Spring 2024
Women's Cup	1/5/2024	TBD	Spring 2024

All applications with the appropriate entry fee must be received by the EPSA office either via paper or electronic format, and an electronic copy of the application sent to the Cup Commissioner, by 5:00 pm EST on the deadline specified for the particular cup competition. Any applications received after that time will be excluded from the competition without exception. Application forms will be posted on the EPSA website (www.eastpasa.net) and emailed to previous entrants and each league.

Please note that you may apply any time before the deadline. So, for example, if you wish to apply for the Over 30 Cup which takes place in the spring, you may submit your application and payment any time after September 1st of the preceding year.

All Cup Applications, all Player Pool forms, and all Game Day Rosters must be typed.

Teams may enter multiple cup competitions as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for each individual competition as specified by EPSA, Region 1 and/or USASA depending upon the specific Cup competition.

II. Team and Player Eligibility

All teams and players competing in any EPSA Cup Competition will be required to comply with the conditions of EPSA Bylaw Article XI. Also, all team and player registrations must be fully paid and the data transmitted to the State office ten days prior to the first round of state competition.

Additionally, all teams and players must be able to verify that they are currently registered with this Association and/or another USASA member league. Proof of this registration must be made available immediately upon demand from the Cup Commissioner and/or EPSA President.

Teams are allowed to name up to 30 players in their player pool. There is no requirement to name the 30 players from the start of the competition. Once a team reaches the limit of 30, no more players may be added. Once a player has been listed among the pool, that player is eligible to play until the team is eliminated or they are released from the Team. Players are "cup tied" to any team in which they actually step on the field in a Cup match for that competition. No player may be removed from this form for the duration of the competition.

III. Competition

Competitions will be either single elimination or round-robin group play events.

Single Elimination Matches: All games must come to a conclusion. Games tied at the end of regulation time will be played as stipulated in Article IV and will proceed to FIFA Kicks From the Mark to determine a winner.

Round-Robin Group Play Matches: Teams will be randomly drawn and placed into groups depending on the number of entries. Each team will play the other teams in their bracket for the first round of games, utilizing a 3-1-0 (W-T-L) point system. In the event of ties in points, FIFA regulations will be used to determine the advancing team. See FIFA World Cup 2022 regulations 20(4) and 20(6).

Advancing teams will be bracketed and the semi-finals and final will be single elimination, including overtime and/or Kicks from the Mark.

IV. Game Length

All single elimination games shall be 90 minutes in length with two equal halves. In the event of a tie at the end of regulation for single elimination games, two 15 minute full overtime periods will be played (no golden goal). If the game remains tied after the two full overtime periods then FIFA Kicks from the Mark will be used to determine the winner of the match. Round Robin games may be less than 90 minutes in length with two equal halves.

V. Draw

A blind draw to populate the playing grids will be held at the EPSA State Office after the application deadline with the target to complete the draw within 1 week of the close of the application process. In some cases, where a limited number of teams enter an event, the draw may be conducted at the State Office during normal business hours. EPSA may seed entrants for the draw based on the previous year's results. There is no assurance that a "seed" will take occur.

- A. For events with 10 or less entrants the maximum number of seeds shall be two (2). The two seeds will be the previous year's Champion and Finalist. In the event that one of the previous year's final two teams does not enter the current year's competition, then only the one (1) team that entered shall be seeded.
- B. For events with more than 10 entrants the maximum number of seeds will be 4. The top two seeds will be the previous year's Champion and Finalist. The third and fourth seeds will be the previous year's remaining semi-finalists. In the event that one of the previous year's final four teams does not enter the current year's competition, the number of seeds will be reduced to the number of the final four that do enter.
- C. Please note that seeded teams will only be guaranteed that their 1st round game is at home. Also, if any byes are available in the playing draw, the seeded teams will be awarded a bye in the order of their seeding.

VI. Scheduling

Once the blind draw has been completed the assignment of home and away status will be completed and each team will be provided with a copy of the draw and the first round game schedule. Subsequent rounds will be scheduled after the conclusion of each preceding round or as appropriate to keep the competition schedule moving forward.

Decisions regarding the schedules will be the responsibility of the Cup Commissioner and in consultation with the EPSA President.

There are a few key items that entrants need to be aware of as they participate each year:

- A. All game start times will be at 2:00 pm and the primary playing date will be Sunday, HOWEVER, if the matches are assigned by EPSA and the matches are stacked, game times may occur between 12N onwards. Saturday games will be scheduled only under pressure to complete an event for the Region 1 deadline. The EPSA President and Cup Commissioner always have the authority to waive these requirements. Night games are not available without the express permission of the EPSA President and the Cup Commissioner and the concurrence of the opposing team as well as the availability of qualified referees UNLESS the matches are pre-assigned by EPSA and the matches are stacked, game times may occur between 12N onwards.

- B. Coaches from each team must contact their opponent before the game to ensure that both teams have directions to the field as well as all game details such as start times and uniform colors.

All participating teams are required to exchange the typed EPSA Game Day Rosters with the opposing team without fail prior to the initiation of the match. Failure to exchange the typed Game Day Roster will be considered an issue of protest. If any such protest is to be submitted, it must be submitted electronically to the EPSA Office, the EPSA President and the EPSA Cup Commissioner prior to the initiation of that day's match. The electronic time and date stamp will qualify the receipt of the protest. Such challenges if upheld, and if determined that there was an act of non-compliance and/or inaccurate identity, the team will be fined, will forfeit the match, and the opposing team will automatically move forward to the next round.

- C. Home team is required to change their jerseys if there is a uniform color conflict.
- D. Both teams (players/personnel) must occupy different halves on the same sideline at all games. All spectators are to occupy the opposite sideline and are not permitted in or near the technical area for the duration of the match.
- E. Technical Area: Coaches and Staff must stay within the technical area (one yard on either side of the designated seat or team assembly area) and extending forward to a distance of one yard from the touchline. Occupants of the technical area must behave in a responsible and professional manner. Players warming up must stay behind the technical area and must wear a training vest or top/jacket other than the colors used by the teams on the field.
- F. All Personnel in the technical area must have a current coach's pass or player pass. There will be a maximum of 5 non-game day rostered players allowed in the technical area.
- G. The coach of record ultimately holds the responsibility for the behavior of the players and staff in the technical area. The coach of record also holds the responsibility for ANY person that intrudes upon the assigned technical area, and is subject to a fine and/or suspension for infractions that occur in the assigned technical area from the time that the referees arrive at the field pre-match, to the time that the referees vacate the field after the game.
- H. The home team for the 1st round is the top team in a bracket, unless clearly noted otherwise. In all subsequent rounds the home team will be determined by the Cup Commissioner with consultation from the EPSA office.
- I. EPSA will endeavor to avoid scheduling multiple competitions for the same gender on the same day. This will happen only under pressure to complete an event for the Region 1 deadline.

- J. The intent is to complete the Men's Amateur and Men's Open competitions in the fall. In the event that they are not completed in the fall, the remaining games will be scheduled in the spring or as soon as the weather permits.
- K. For the 2023-2024 Fall Competitions the following are the tentative playing dates at this writing:

Event	Tentative Playing Dates
Men's Amateur	10/15/23, 10/29/23, 11/12/23, 12/3/23 (semi), 12/10/23 (final)

- L. EPSA reserves the right to alter these dates in order to keep the competition schedule moving forward.
- M. EPSA will adjust its Cup schedules in the spring as needed to ensure that the appropriate Champions and Finalists are determined to meet the deadlines set forth by Region 1.

VII. Contact Requirements and Team Notification Plans

Email will be the primary method of communication.

Each team **MUST** have two contacts that have email access and that will be responsible for disseminating all information to the players and personnel of their respective team.

Each team must have a contact that has an answering machine or voice mail capabilities in the event that phone contact is required.

VIII. Score Reporting

A representative of each team must email the score of the game to the EPSA office, EPSA President and the Cup Commissioner no later than three (3) hours after the conclusion of their match. Failure to do so can result in a \$25 fine.

The appropriate email addresses are: eastpasoccer@gmail.com, rhbchem@aol.com, and blsantangelo@comcast.net.

IX. Fields

To ensure that there is no confusion on games the following guidelines must be followed for every game in all competitions.

- A. Each team must identify their home field on their application. This is the field that will be used for all games. Teams cannot change their home field with less than 7 days prior notification and express approval by the EPSA President and the Cup Commissioner.

The EPSA President and the Cup Commissioner may require an inspection of the field site to determine size and suitability of the field and suitability of the lighting. No field site that falls outside of the FIFA parameters will be acceptable as an EPSA Cup match site. The parameters for field dimensions are:

Length: minimum of 100 yds to maximum 120 yds.

Width: minimum 60 yds to maximum 80 yds.

Other conditions, such as surface conditions, equipment conditions, and safety factors will be included in determining the suitability of the field site.

ADDITIONALLY, in order to “weatherproof” field conditions, EPSA may assign EPSA Cup Competition matches to turf fields that represent the aforementioned conditions as prescribed by FIFA. The weather conditions relative to the mid-Atlantic States can be unpredictable, and the appointment of such “turf” fields is a prudent intervention to mitigate certain environmental conditions that may interfere with the EPSA competition schedule. This, of course, will have a “field usage fee”, however, as in the recent past, EPSA will address some reasonable reduced “split” in cost to the participating teams.

- B. To verify field availability, all teams must submit a copy of a field usage permit and insurance certificate along with their Cup Application, unless the team applying owns their own field.
- C. Teams must ensure that their home field is available on Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 pm, unless EPSA has arranged for assigned turf fields, where matches may occur between 12N EST and 7PM EST.
- D. After the Cup Draw, teams must confirm with EPSA via email the exact address and field location of their field, for each relevant competition, so the referees can be notified.
- E. Both coaches are responsible for contacting their opponent and ensuring that both teams know where the game is being played.
- F. Each team pays one half of the current EPSA Referee Fee to the referee crew before kick-off.
- G. If a team loses their home field the game may be rescheduled to their opponent’s field (if it is available) and if there is adequate time for notification of the referees.
- H. If a team loses their field or it is regularly declared unplayable for whatever reason, the Cup Commissioner will evaluate the circumstances and may schedule any future games for that team as away games.

X. Field Closings

During the competition the Cup Commissioner and/or President will evaluate the weather conditions and determine if widespread weather conditions exist that would warrant postponement of a full day's schedule. Every effort will be made to make this decision early on the day of the competition. Given the geographic size of the area in EPSA, this will be a rare event.

If the Cup Commissioner and/or President does not postpone the schedule, then all games shall be played at the discretion of the referees. The referees will evaluate the field conditions to determine if safe playing conditions exist. If the referees declare the field unplayable, the Cup Commissioner will reschedule the game and there is no guarantee that the game will be played at the original home field. If a field is declared unplayable, the referee crew is to be paid 50% of the referee fee for that game which will be split equally between the teams.

If a Club closes their fields after the referee crew is en route to the game, and it is less than 4 hours prior to the scheduled kick-off time, the Home Team will be responsible for paying the full referee fees for that game. It will be at the discretion of the EPSA President and the Cup Commissioner whether the game is rescheduled back at the original home field. If a club repeatedly closes their fields or regularly has them declared unplayable (meaning more than once in a season) the club may lose all remaining home games for all competitions underway.

At the discretion of the EPSA the semi-finals and/or final of any Cup competition may be scheduled at a neutral site, especially if weather or field conditions inhibit completion of a competition. In such situations, and only with approval of the EPSA President, participating teams may be required to play semi-finals and/or final of any Cup Competition at a neutral site. (ADD). Participating teams will be required to pay a reduced field usage fee with EPSA subsidizing the balance of the cost.

If the assigned field is closed by the Club or Facility prior to the day of the game, the Teams may work to find an alternate location. So long as the new location is within the general area of the original location and officials can be given sufficient notice, the location may be changed in an effort to play the game.

XI. Semi-Final and Final Games

Four referees (including a fourth) will be assigned to all State Cup Semi-Final and Final Games as long as sufficient qualified referees are available to do so. The presence of a fourth official is intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the officiating for these important matches.

There will be no additional cost to any of the teams for this fourth official as this fee will be paid by EPSA and the EPSA Referee Committee. The teams are still responsible for paying the referee and the assistant referees as stipulated in Section IX.

XII. Documentation Requirements

- A. Player Pool Forms - each team must email or fax a typed copy of their player pool form to the EPSA office and the Cup Commissioner no later than 10 days prior to any Cup game.
- B. The EPSA President and/or The Cup Commissioner may request official documentation of a player's identity at the field site at any State Cup game, but then all of the rostered players from both teams at that game will be expected to provide the same documentation. Players must be registered in accordance with the Bylaws and Policies of the EPSA and the USASA.
- C. A team that does not submit a typed Player Pool Form 10 days prior to the first game of any Cup competition shall be subject to a fine of \$50.00. If a team does not submit a typed updated pool form after the first round of any Cup competition, the last known player pool form will be used.
- D. Suspension Reports – when a player receives a suspension it is the team's responsibility to provide EPSA with subsequent written proof that the suspension was served. Written proof is defined as original line up sheets or legible copies of line-up sheets from regularly scheduled league or Cup games for each game served. The suspended player's name shall not be entered at all on any line-up sheet used to document service of a suspension, and his/her slot on the line-up sheet shall remain blank for the length of the suspension. Each line-up supplied must be signed by the Game Official and be visibly dated. Each line-up must be from a game that was actually played and for a team to which the suspended player is actually registered to play. Each line-up supplied must be from a game that was played after the date of the game for which that player was suspended. EPSA will consider a suspension unserved until written proof is provided to the EPSA office. Cards for suspended players will remain in the EPSA office until the suspension is served.
- E. The failure of a team to abide by this documentation procedure exactly is not sufficient grounds to establish the use of an ineligible player in a Cup game, without further proof of such ineligibility; however, it will result in the assessment of a \$50 fine per instance for failure to follow this policy.

XIII. Suspensions and Penalties

Suspensions and penalties for yellow and red card offenses will be handled by the State Cup Commissioner. Please note the following:

- A. Suspension of a player, coach, administrator, and/or team official who is ejected from a State Cup game commences immediately. The suspension for a game ejection will be a minimum of two games with the exact length determined by the EPSA Office, after reviewing the referee game report. Do not play that individual in any league or Cup games until you receive the final suspension.

- B. Any player, coach, administrator, and/or team official that accumulates three (3) yellow cards in League and/or Cup play is subject to a one (1) game suspension. If a player, coach, administrator, and/or official receives two (2) yellow cards in a game and is thereby shown a red card the player, coach, administrator, and/or official can receive a penalty for the game ejection as well as an additional penalty(ies) as determined by the FIFA Disciplinary Code guidelines and directives.
- C. If the player now has accumulated three yellow cards. Receiving 2 yellow cards in a match will be treated as 2 separate yellow cards for accumulation purposes.
- D. Suspension notifications will be sent to the player and the team's coach. In the event that the notice is returned, the player is still responsible for serving their suspension. Every effort will be made to contact the player, but the player must take responsibility for contacting EPSA if they do not receive notification of their suspension.
- E. Suspensions and their status will be updated on EPSA's website as changes occur.
- F. **Suspensions, and all disciplinary action(s) directed towards a player, coach, administrator, and/or official will be determined by the FIFA Disciplinary Code guidelines and directives.**

XIV. Awards and Prizes

Trophies

Team trophies will be awarded to the winning team in each Division where 4 or more teams have entered.

Competition Prize Money

EPSA will award prize money to our State Cup Champions as follows:

- Competitions of 20 or more teams -- \$1500 prize
- Competitions of 10 or more teams -- \$750 prize
- Competitions of at least 2 games -- \$500 prize
- All other competitions of at least one game -- \$250 prize
- Prizes will not be aggregated.
- Checks will be made payable to the Club Entity, not to an individual.

Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer Assoc (EPSA)

4070 Butler Pike, Suite 100
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
610.940.5755 eastpasoccer@gmail.com