**NEFC Thanksgiving Showcase**
OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES
**REGISTRATION AND CREDENTIALS**

All teams must register with the tournament prior to the start of the competition. Final MANDATORY REGISTRATION details will be communicated with accepted teams. Failure to register will result in automatic disqualification from the Tournament without a refund of the fee.

**TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS**
James Hamblin - jhamblin@nefc.us
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**TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS**
Progin Park, Lancaster, MA

**CREDENTIALS**
The Tournament is Unrestricted and is sanctioned by USYSA and US Soccer. The event is open to all US Club Soccer, USYSA, USSF, USSSA, and International teams.

At the Mandatory Registration, teams must provide the required credentials.

This includes:

- Two copies of the league or state approved roster, with all players (including guests) who will be participating for the team at the Tournament represented.
- Proof of date of birth for every player indicated on the roster - acceptable forms of documentation include:
    - Approved and current player pass card if not displayed on Official Roster
    - Copy of birth certificate
    - Copy of passport
    - All other government issued documentation certifying date of birth
- Completed and signed NEFC medical release forms for every player indicated on the roster. No club forms, or other medical release forms, will be accepted. These forms will be kept by the Tournament.
- Guest player documentation (see Guest Players rule)
- Permission to Travel forms provided by the state association.
    - USYS teams traveling from Region I States do NOT need to provide

permission to travel documentation, with the exception of USYS teams playing out of New Jersey.
    - USCS teams do NOT need to provide permission to travel documentation.
    - Teams affiliated with other USSF (AYSO, Super Y, etc.) organizations MUST provide insurance and permission to travel documentation.

**For a team coming from a CONCACAF nation:**

- Players must present passports at registration or, if from a nation that the United States does not require a passport, proof of entry into the United States that is required by the United States.
- Teams are required to have and present player picture identification cards.
- The team must have an approved travel permit form from its Provincial or National Association approving the team's participation in the tournament.

***A note on credentials: Team representatives must have the mandatory credentials at the mandatory registration, but also easily accessible at the fields of each tournament match.***

**CLUB PASS**

A player who has been properly registered for the Tournament may play for any team at the Tournament that is affiliated with the same club as the player, provided they have an eligible birth date to participate in that team's age group.

Club pass players do not need to be otherwise noted in the team's tournament roster. Players may play for more than one team during the tournament.

**GUEST PLAYERS**

Guest Players shall be defined as players who are not regular, official members of the club whose team will be utilizing them in the tournament.

All guest players must be members of an affiliated USSF organization. Proof of membership should be included with the credentials provided during the Mandatory Registration.

Up to and no more than five (5) guest players may be utilized by any team during the Tournament. Guest players may be hand written into the approved Tournament roster.

Accepted documentation includes:

- USYS/USCS, or other USSF approved player pass cards
- A copy of a USYS/USCA, or other USSF approved roster of the team where the player is registered, with the player indicated
- USYS/USCS or other USSF affiliate Guest Player/Loan Player forms/documentation

***Teams must have the other required credentials for every Guest Player***

**DUAL ROSTERING**
A player may be rostered to two different teams within the tournament.

**ROSTERS**
Teams may register a maximum of (22) players for 11v11 divisions, a maximum of (18) players for 9v9, and (16) players for 7v7; This number of players INCLUDES Guest Players. (at this event, all rostered players will be eligible to play in a given match within these limits)

**RULES OF PLAY**
FIFA Laws of the Game will apply as modified by USYSA and NEFC as described herein.

***Note: The majority of Referees will not be trained on new changes for 2025-2026 until January through March of 2026 therefore the 2024-2025 IFAB Laws of the Game will be used***

**REFEREES**
Referees will be certified by USSF.

**DURATION OF GAMES**
- All U12 tournament matches will be 60 minutes in length, consisting of two 30 minute halves.
- All U13-U14 tournament matches will be 70 minutes in length, consisting of two 35 minute halves.
- All U15-U19 tournament matches will be 80 minutes in length, consisting of two 40 minute halves.
- Half time will be five minutes long; however, this period may be shortened at the discretion of the Tournament Director, in the event that the tournament schedule has fallen behind.
- All games will be played with a running clock. In consideration of our tight scheduling, time will only be added in very extreme circumstances. The referee is the official timekeeper, and all disputes shall be settled at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

**SIZE OF BALL**
- 9v9 age groups will utilize a size 4 ball.
- 11v11 age groups will utilize a size 5 ball.

**PLAYERS AGE AND ELIGIBILITY**
This tournament is for players born in the following birth years; 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and younger.

**CHECK-IN, FIELD AND GAME EQUIPMENT**
All teams must be present to check in with the appropriate Field Marshal 30 minutes prior to their kickoff time. Any team failing to check-in may be required to forfeit that match at the final discretion of the Tournament Director.

- Players are required to wear shin guards in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game.
- Where uniform colors are similar, the designated home team will wear light color jerseys and socks.
    - Home team is listed first on the schedule.
    - The away team will wear dark color jerseys and socks.
- Away team will begin the match with the ball, the home team will choose sides.
- If a clash in colors remains the team not abiding by the color designation will be responsible to change uniforms.
- Players and coaches will take one side of the pitch, and supporters will take the other side of the pitch. No one will be allowed behind either end line.
- Covered Casts are permitted with the permission of the referee. All players are required to wear shin guards.
- The tournament will supply game balls at each field. Each team should also be prepared to supply 1 FIFA approved game ball each.

**SUBSTITUTIONS**
For all ages, a player may be substituted at any stoppage of play with the permission of the referee.

**COACHING**
All Coaches have total responsibility for the conduct of their players, substitutes, friends and spectators at all times. Coaching from the sidelines (giving direction to one's own team on points of strategy and position) is permitted, provided:

- No mechanical devices are used
- The tone of the voice is instructive and not derogatory
- Each coach or substitute remains no less than 10 yards on their side of the halfway line
- No coach, substitute, or spectator makes derogatory remarks or gestures to the referees, other coaches, players, substitutes, or spectators
- No coach, substitute, or spectator uses profanity or incites, in any manner, disruptive behavior.

**CAUTIONS AND EJECTIONS**

- A player receiving two cautions (yellow cards) in a single game is considered to have been given an ejection (red card).
- A player who has been ejected (sent off), will not be replaced. A player who has been ejected will not return for that game and will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled game.
- A player who is ejected for violent conduct or serious foul play may be expelled

from the tournament, at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

- Any player or coach who assaults a referee will be expelled from the Tournament.
- A coach who has been ejected will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled game, and may be expelled from the tournament at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
    - During game suspension(s) for coaches, there can be NO contact between the team and the coach during the game and the coach must be out of sight and sound of the field.
    - Additionally, the coach must not be involved in unacceptable conduct
    - Failure to adhere to this rule will result in an immediate ejection from the tournament for the coach.

***The tournament director will notify the appropriate federation regarding any disciplinary actions taken.***

**SUSPENDED AND TERMINATED GAMES**

- If, in the opinion of the referee, a game must be suspended (for any reason), the game may be resumed, but is subject to being ended not less than five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled start of the next game.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, a game must be terminated for misconduct of players, bench coaches, or spectators; the offending team could be suspended from further play and will forfeit that game and all remaining games.
- All previous points earned remain as played.

**OFFSIDE**

The offside law will be applied by referees in all games. (5v5, 7v7, 9v9, & 11v11)

**TOURNAMENT COMPETITION AND ORGANIZATION DETERMINING WINNERS**

- Teams will be awarded points on the following basis:
    - Three (3) points for each Win
    - One (1) points for each Tie
    - Zero (0) points for each Loss

At the end of a preliminary round, advancement shall be determined by the number of points earned in preliminary matches. In the event of a tie within a bracket, the following criteria shall be used to determine final placements, in order:

1. Head to head competition
    a. (Not considered in 6 Team brackets due to cross-over games)
2. Most Wins
3. Goal Differential (maximum (5) per game)
4. Goals For (maximum (5) per game)
5. Goals Against(maximum (5) per game)
6. FIFA penalty Kicks (to be organized at the discretion of the Tournament Director)

Placement of bracket winners and determination of wild card winners for playoff rounds or for consolation match ups will be determined by the same criteria.

Notes:

- Where teams are in different groups, #1 will not apply
    - All teams who are tied on points must have all played each other in group play. This does not occur with 6 team groups and cross-over play) or in brackets with 3 groups where the 4th team, or "wildcard" needs to be advanced
- In the event of a tie between three (3) or more teams, #1 above will not be considered. The tie breaker criteria will be used in numerical order (based upon the rules above) until the tie and been resolved.
- The Tournament Director, acting within the parameters of these rules, will determine the teams to advance to the final rounds.
- The Tournament Director may change placements and match-ups to better conform to tournament goals:
    - for example, if teams have already played each other at this event during tournament group play; if teams play each other multiple times due to local/league play; or if teams are from the same club
- Field Marshals, in cooperation with the referees, will be responsible for score reporting.

**PLAYOFF AND BRACKET ADVANCEMENT**

Bracket of 8 Teams

Will play a final consisting of the top team from each side of the group meeting in the final.

Bracket of 6 Teams

Will play a crossover format playing all teams in the opposite group. The final will consist of the top two “wildcard” teams from the total bracket of 6. This could mean that both “Wildcard” teams could be from the same group.

Bracket of 4 Teams

Will play a final consisting of the top two teams from the bracket of 4.

**FORFEITS**

A team shall be allowed a five (5) minute grace period after the scheduled kickoff time before the match is awarded to their opponent. In 11v11 matches, a minimum of seven (7) players constitutes a team and if seven (7) players are present, the game will not be delayed.

In no case shall a team, which forfeits a game, be declared a group winner or wild card team. If an apparent group winner forfeits a game, the group team with the next best record shall be named the group winner.

If a team is the cause for termination of a game, that team will be considered to have forfeited that game.

All forfeits can be overturned by the tournament director.

A forfeit in the preliminary rounds shall be awarded as (3) points
For tiebreaking purposes, the score will be recorded as 3-0.
Forfeits of a game in the playoff rounds shall be recorded as 3-0 game.

**PLAYOFF ROUNDS**
Winners of each group advance into the playoff rounds.

Should a playoff game remain a draw after the end of regular play, FIFA penalty kicks will be taken to determine the winner. The best of five penalty kicks taken alternately by each team will determine the winner.

Only those players on the field at the end of the game may compete. If the penalty kick score is tied at the end of the five kicks, the teams will continue to take penalty kicks alternately until there is a winner. All players on the field must kick before any player may kick a second time.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**
In case of inclement weather or other force majeure, the Tournament Director will have the authority to change games as follows:

- Relocate or reschedule any game(s).
- Change the duration of any game(s).
- Cancel any preliminary game(s).
- Preliminary games terminated by Game or Tournament officials after one half of play can be considered official as of the time of termination.
- Determine a revised format for advancement.

**GUEST TEAMS**
The Tournament may accept a team as a “Guest Team” in order to fill a late vacancy in a Division. Guest Teams cannot advance out of Bracket. Guest Team game results are predetermined to be a 2-0 against the Guest Team.

**PROTESTS**
A team wishing to protest must do so to the Tournament Director within 30 minutes of the game in question. The formal protest must be made from the head coach of the team protesting, and must be made in writing by email.

***All decisions of the Tournament Director are final.***

**TOURNAMENT SITE RULES**
In addition to specific facility rules posted to the tournament website please see the following rules that must also be adhered to.

- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at game sites.

- Smoking is prohibited at all sites and is enforced.
- Dogs or similar pets are not allowed.
- The placing or erection of any structure or object which will cause the penetration of the synthetic surface is prohibited.
- The use of chewing gum is prohibited.
- The consumption of sunflower seeds or shelled nuts is prohibited.
- The use or possession of glass containers of any kind is prohibited. The use of roller blades, skateboards or bicycles is prohibited.
- The use of BBQ grills or any other open flame is prohibited.
- Metal cleats or spikes are prohibited.
- The marking of lines onto any surface with paint, tape or any other substance are prohibited.
- Stakes that enter the ground are strictly prohibited.

Individuals and Teams not adhering to these rules, or those of Mass Youth Soccer that have been communicated to teams, may be expelled from the tournament at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

**GENERAL**
Under no circumstances whatsoever will the Tournament, NEFC (or any members of this organization), US Soccer (or any of its affiliates), or any of our Tournament Facilities be responsible for any expenses (including the Tournament entry fee and hotel fees) incurred by any team participating in the Tournament. This includes any circumstance where the Tournament must cancel any Tournament match, any part of a Tournament match, or the Tournament in its entirety.

Any team accepted into the Tournament that withdraws will forfeit the entry fee in its entirety. The Tournament Director's interpretation of the rules shall be final. The Tournament Director reserves the right to decide on all matters pertaining to this Tournament.

**HOTEL**
Teams participating in the Tournament must (as a condition of acceptance) make all hotel accommodations using our tournament housing service. Teams not using our tournament housing service will be disqualified, and will not receive a refund.

**REFUNDS**
The Tournament entry fee is non refundable.

**Sportsmanship Statement**
**All participants deserve the right to play in an environment free from hostile and distracting behavior.**

**Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated, the game may be stopped and**

**sanctions applied for violations of policy or codes of conduct.**

**Please enjoy the game and do your part to create a positive soccer experience for all.**