



Sponsored by AYSO Region 37 Corona/Norco, California

# 2026 AYSO Pony Express Tournament

## 10U-14U Tournament Rules

### Jurisdiction

Unless otherwise noted, the current AYSO National Rules and Regulations, Section 1 and FIFA Laws of the Game will be used for this tournament. The following rules are intended specifically for this tournament ONLY!

The Tournament Committee (incl. Tournament Director, Assistant Director(s), Field Director, Referee Director and other designated staff) will have jurisdiction over all games played. Disputes will be resolved by the end of the soccer day. Referee judgment calls are NOT subject to dispute or protest!

### Fee

Entire entry fee and referee deposit must accompany tournament application and will be returned if application is not accepted. Fee and deposit must be a single check issued from the Region's account (no personal checks, money orders, credit cards, etc.).

|           |         |                                                     |
|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Fees are: | 9U/10U  | \$925 (\$525 entry fee plus \$400 referee deposit)  |
|           | 11U/12U | \$950 (\$550 entry fee plus \$400 referee deposit)  |
|           | 13U/14U | \$1000 (\$600 entry fee plus \$400 referee deposit) |

### Acceptance

Applications are due December 31, 2025.

Applications will be accepted on a first-come basis, based on completed application (see Team Application Form for criteria). Teams will be notified by email within 48 hours of the receipt of their applications.

Teams not accepted into the tournament will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list or having their application returned within 48 hours.

The primary form of communication between the Tournament and applying teams will be email and the Tournament website. Teams must designate a Team Contact on their application who has email and Internet access.

### Refunds

Teams withdrawing 30 days or more before the tournament will be issued a full refund.

Teams withdrawing less than 30 days before the start of the tournament will only be issued a refund if a replacement team can be found.

If the tournament is canceled and cannot be rescheduled a full refund will be issued

For teams that are eligible, referee deposit refunds will be mailed no later than 14 days after the end of the tournament. Referee deposit refunds will be on a prorated basis, comparing the number of assignments actually completed versus the number required. (See item 8 Referees for requirement information)

### Rainout/ Cancellation

Should the tournament be rained out on the original date, the tournament will be canceled.

If the tournament is canceled due to weather after partially completing and it cannot be rescheduled to be completed, refunds will be made to teams on a prorated basis, based on the number of actual games played.

If the tournament cannot be held due to weather or other conditions beyond the control of the tournament hosts, then a full refund will be sent to all teams, less the cost of any pre-ordered items (items for sale by the tournament which are not included with the registration fee). Any pre-ordered items will be sent to the team

### Players/Teams

Players on participating teams must be properly registered to play in AYSO. Coaches are responsible to ensure that all players meet eligibility requirements.

The team roster must be verified and approved by each player's Regional Commissioner. Roster changes may be submitted (with the written approval of the Regional Commissioner); however, these changes must be received by Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026. There will be no roster changes allowed on tournament day.

3 Guest Players (players from a different Region from the applying team's Region) will be allowed for each team. However, the Guest Player will be required to have the approval of both the Guest Player's Regional Commissioner and the Host Team Regional Commissioner (see Guest Player Form).

Coed teams will be accepted; however they must play in the boys' divisions only.

Division 9U/10U will play 7-v-7, and there will be a roster limit of 10 players per team.  
Division 11U/12U will play 9-v-9, and there will be a roster limit of 12 players per team.  
Division 13U/14U will play 11-v-11, and there will be a roster limit of 15 players per team.

All players must play at least half of each game. Violation of these player rules exposes a team to protest and renders them subject to forfeiture of game and possible disqualification at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

For identification purposes, each player must have a laminated identification card with name, picture, AYSO ID#, and the signature of their Regional Commissioner. These ID cards must be presented for inspection at check-in time or upon request by any tournament official or match referee. Alternatively, a signed picture roster generated from the association platform will be accepted.

## **Coaches**

Each team is limited to one Head Coach and one Assistant Coach (must have two coaches). These coaches must be the ones listed on the Official Team Roster.

Each AYSO Coach must have a current season volunteer form on file with NSTC, provide their AYSO Identification Number, and be Safe Haven, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, SafeSport, and CDC Concussion certified.

Both Head Coach and Assistant Coach must have Certifications as follows:

|          |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 9U/10U:  | 10U Certification or higher          |
| 11U/12U: | 12U Certification or higher          |
| 13U/14U: | Intermediate Certification or higher |

Coaches are expected to set the example for their team in exhibiting proper AYSO behavior and Kids Zone behavior. Coaches are expected to remain in the technical area during games and only enter the field of play as requested by the referee.

## **Referees**

Each team in the tournament will provide a crew of 3 referees. These referees will be assigned up to 3 games, based on their qualifications.

Each AYSO referee must have a current season volunteer form in file with NSTC, provide their AYSO Identification Number, and be Safe-Haven, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, SafeSport, and CDC Concussion Certified. USSF referees with AYSO cross certification is acceptable.

Only the diagonal system of control will be used to referee the games.

Referees for 13U/14U games should be Advanced level or equivalent USSF level or above.  
Referees for 11U/12U games should be Intermediate level or equivalent USSF level or above.  
Referees for 9U/10U games must be Regional or equivalent USSF level or above

Youth referees (center referees) must be at least 2 years older than the age group they are refereeing.

All referees must be in full uniform as defined by AYSO and USSF, including the Referee Badge. Referees not in uniform will not be permitted to referee games, and their team's referee deposit may be subject to forfeiture.

If all assignments are successfully completed, the Referee Deposit will be refunded (see REFEREE PLAN for more details).

Referees are expected to check in at the Referee Station at least 30 minutes prior to their assigned game. Failure to appear on time may result in a replacement referee crew being assigned to the field. Once a replacement crew has been assigned, they will have priority and the original crew must report to the Referee station for alternative assignment.

Players in the tournament will not be allowed to referee.

Referees will be expected to uphold the tournament rules, AYSO Rules and Regulations and FIFA laws. Any failure of the referee to uphold these rules may be cause for dismissal from the tournament, and will place a team's referee deposit refund in jeopardy.

Referee Deposits will be refunded at the tournament or within 14 days of the tournament if referee assignments have been completed. Partial refunds will be given based upon the number of games completed.

AYSO PRO youth referees are appreciated at the tournament, as long as they are not players on a team in the tournament. Youth referees will be required to have a Youth Referee Form (provided by the tournament application) on them at all times while officiating at the tournament, and present to any tournament official upon request. This form must be signed by the youth referee's Referee Administrator, and be accompanied by a copy of the youth referee's Youth Volunteer Application Form.

## Fields

All fields will be set up and taken down by the tournament staff

Trash cans will be provided at each field. Teams will be expected to clean up all trash in their area before leaving.

## Format

This is a pool-play tournament.

Each age division will be bracketed into playing pools. Each team will play a minimum of 4 preliminary play games within their respective pools. Where there are sufficient teams, divisions will also be separated into multiple competition flights.

Teams will advance from qualifying pools based on pool play standings points. Number of teams advancing per pool will be determined by the number of pools in the division.

## Check-In

Teams must check in 60 minutes prior to their first game and must present Game Cards for as many games as the team will play in the tournament (including medal-round games). The Game Cards must be properly completed with the players listed by first name-last name in jersey number order. The players listed on the game cards must match the approved roster submitted with the team's application. All players listed on the roster must appear on each game card, even if there is an expectation that one (or more) might miss a scheduled game.

Each coach or team representative must provide AYSO Player Registration Forms with original ink signatures for verification by tournament officials.

Coaches must have these Player Registration Forms with them at all times and ready for presentation to Tournament Officials

Late arriving players must be escorted to the check-in station by a team official along with their Player Registration Form and be cleared by the Tournament Staff before participating in any games.

## Games

Pool play games will consist of 20/25 minute halves with a five minute half time. There will be a running clock during the match including substitutions. There will be no time added on for injuries or time wasted in qualifying rounds. Games will expect to end on time, and may be shortened if they started late. Pool play games may end in a tie.

Championship games will be full length for that division (see chart below). Championship games will be played until there is a winner (see Medal Round rules below).

Game duration shall be as follows:

| <u>Division</u> | <u>Pool Play</u> | <u>Semi, Final Rounds</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 9U/10U          | 20 minute half   | 25 minute half            |
| 11U/12U         | 25 minute half   | 30 minute half            |
| 13U/14U         | 25 minute half   | 35 minute half            |

The "home" team will be the first team or top team listed on the game schedule and will be responsible for providing the game balls. The home team will be situated on the North or West side of the field, and the visitor will be situated on the South or East side. Spectators must remain on the side of the field designated for their team. The home team will change jerseys or pinnies in the event of a color conflict with the visitor team. If there are any questions, the referee will determine whether this is necessary.

There will be no warming up on the field. Teams must warm up prior to taking the field. As soon as the previous game has ended, teams must clear the field and the teams for the next game must take their places.

Forfeits - Teams must check in at the designated Field Coordinator Station 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. There will be a five-minute grace period at the start of the game for a team to take the field before a forfeit is declared. The score for a forfeit match will be 1-0 for the remaining team (See STANDINGS for the points to be awarded). For 9U/10U division teams, there is a minimum of 5 players on the field to continue a game. For 11U/12U the minimum number is 6 players. For all other divisions, there must be a minimum of 7 players to continue a game. If a team cannot field the minimum number of players, the game will be abandoned and a forfeit will be declared.

Suspended Games - The Tournament Committee may determine to end matches early if field schedule is behind due to game delays, interference, or if weather conditions provide unsafe conditions; and may distribute awards according to games played and points. The Tournament Committee will determine the outcome of any single game which is terminated prematurely (due to inclement weather, participant injury, or interference by outside party, etc.).

Abandoned Games - if any pool play games cannot be played due to circumstances beyond the control of the tournament, the final standings of the pool will be determined by applying the Winning Percentage formula (Total Points Earned in all Game Played divided by Total Points Possible for the Number of Games Played) to each team in the pool. Note. This does not apply to games which were shortened due to late a late start. Only the Tournament Director or designee can declare a game to be abandoned or not played.

**There will be a running clock during all pool play games.** There will be no time added on for injuries or time wasted during substitutions. Each coach is urged to have their team ready at the start of each half and to conduct substitutions in as expedient a manner as possible.

**A horn will be sounded when it is time to end each game.** The horn will not stop the game, but will indicate to the referee that it is time to stop the game as soon as the ball is in neutral territory.

## Substitutions

Substitutions shall be allowed approximately mid way through each half for ALL divisions 9U/10U through 13U/14U and will be recorded on the game cards by the referee.

All substitutions must be approved and recognized by the referee. Substitutions may be made for injured players; however, they may not return until the beginning of the next quarter and will be considered as having played the current quarter (exception: an injured player not replaced may return to play at any time with the referee's permission).

Substitutions in overtime periods of medal round matches will be at the beginning of each period only.

## Standings

Standings for pool play games will be determined on the "ten-point system" as follows:

|          |                                                                               |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WIN      | = 6 points                                                                    |
| TIE      | = 3 points                                                                    |
| LOSS     | = 0 points                                                                    |
| GOAL     | = 1 point per goal, up to a maximum of 3 per game                             |
| SHUTOUT  | = 1 point for a shutout, including a 0-0 tie                                  |
| FORFEIT  | = 8 points (scored as a 1-0 win)                                              |
| RED CARD | = 2 point deduction for each card (includes players, substitutes, or coaches) |

Winners of ties in standings will be determined as follows:

Head to head competition  
Most number of wins

Least amount of goals allowed  
Total goals scored (up to 3 goals per game)  
Least number of sportsmanship point deductions (1 point per misconduct, 1 point per spectator incident)  
Kicks from the Penalty Mark (coin toss in the event teams are no longer present)

Wildcard teams will be the team(s) with the highest standings points from all teams in the division who are not automatically advancing.

Standings will be updated hourly at the Tournament Scoreboard via online at AYSO37.org. The deadline to challenge the posted results will be at the conclusion of Pool Play.

#### **Advancements**

Pool winners (and in some cases wildcard teams) will advance to medal round play.

Teams will play semi-final and/or championship final matches, depending on the number of team in each pool and the format of play for that flight.

#### **Medal-Rounds**

All medal round matches ending in a tie will have two full overtime periods of five minutes in length with teams changing field direction after the first five minute period. In these matches, if still tied after overtime play, the game shall be decided by FIFA Kicks from the Penalty Mark.

#### **Awards**

Medals will be presented to coaches and players from the first through the fourth-place teams in each division.

A tournament pin and a small souvenir will be presented to each player (roster max) and 2 coaches.

A team trophy will be awarded to the coach of the winning team in each age division.

#### **Conduct**

Coaches will be expected to set a positive example for the team, and will be held responsible for the actions of their team including spectators. All spectators must remain behind the control line and between the 18-yard. Two coaches maximum per team, and they must remain in the marked coaching area (within ten yards either way from halfway line).

At the conclusion of each match, the referees will indicate on the reverse of the game cards any point deductions for poor sportsmanship. Point deductions will be used as tie-breakers should that become necessary. Referees will be required to complete a game misconduct report for all misconducts during the game, as well as any incidents of interference by spectators.

Any coach or spectator ejected must immediately leave the vicinity of the playing field (out of sight and sound) and will be prohibited from attending the next scheduled game. Any player sent off (red carded) must immediately leave the vicinity of the game (under supervision of his/her parent or Safe Haven-certified adult), and may not return to the field of play during the current game, including for the post-game handshake, and may not be substituted for, and is suspended from participation in the next game. In the alternative, the player may stay on the sideline under the supervision of the coach. There will be penalty point deductions for all send-offs (see Standings rules).

Any violent conduct red card or ejection will result in that player/coach/spectator being barred from the remainder of the tournament.

If it is determined that an ineligible player has participated in a game, the team will forfeit all games in which that player participated illegally. Furthermore, if it is determined that the coach knowingly played a player illegally, that coach will be barred from further participation in the tournament.

It is mandatory to play a scheduled game. If it is determined that a coach willfully fails to have his team participate in a scheduled game, the coach will be dismissed from the tournament and the incident will be reported to the respective Regional Commissioner.

All conduct problems will be reported to the respective Regional Commissioner.

All Serious Incidents will be reported to the respective Regional Commissioner as well as Area, Section and AYSO National Office parties.

#### **Medical/First Aid**

There will be a First Aid station at the main tent where participants may receive ice, etc. for minor injuries.

There will be a roving first aid response staff member to respond to injuries on the field. Field Monitors will communicate via radio to call the first aid staffer to the field where first aid is requested.

If an injury is serious, the first aid staff or Safety Director will call 911 for emergency response.

Directions to the nearest hospital/urgent care center will be available at the First Aid station. Nearest hospital (Corona Regional Medical Center) is located at 800 S Main St, Corona CA 92882.

### **Uniforms/Safety**

All players must wear the approved AYSO uniform only according to the National Rules & Regulations, and all players on the same team must wear matching uniforms (goalkeeper excepted – may have a different jersey, AYSO logo is recommended but not required.)

Each player's uniform must be marked with a permanently-affixed unique number that matches the uniform number on the Game Card, and may not exchange numbered jerseys with any other player during the game including the goalkeeper.

Garments may be worn under the uniform (i.e. long sleeves, etc.) during inclement weather, however the match referee will be the judge of what should be allowed or not.

Not allowed: Jewelry (including covered earrings), hard metal or plastic clips on clothing or hair. No player will be allowed to participate with any type of cast or splint. Removal of any type of cast or splint at the field or surrounding are in order to participate shall disqualify that team member from participation.

AYSO will permit the use of knee braces by players in AYSO events and programs; providing that the brace is adequately covered and padded in the judgment of the referee, so as to eliminate the possibility of its causing injury to the other players on the field.

### **Protests**

Protests will be considered only for the following reasons:

An ineligible player has played.

One or more registered player(s), present and in uniform, have not played the required one half of the game (except for illness or injury as recorded by the game referee).

All protests must be presented in writing to the Tournament Director within 1/2 hour of the completion of the game.

All protests will be heard by a Protest Committee of at least three persons selected by the Tournament Director. In all cases, the members of the Protest Committee will be unrelated to either team involved in the protest. **ALL PROTEST DECISIONS ARE FINAL!**

Referee judgment calls are **FINAL** and are not grounds for nor subject to protest or dispute!

### **Rules Interpretation**

The Tournament Director retains the right to interpret and apply the tournament rules to the optimum benefit of all tournament participants. The tournament Director does not have the right to interpret the Law of the Game and AYSO Modifications to the laws of the Games unless they are an appropriate "Director of Referee Instruction."