

2026 CAROLINAS CUP RULES AND REGULATIONS

Roster Requirements

- Teams and players must be registered and in good standing with their State Association.
- All players must be at least 18 years of age by the start of the tournament to participate.
Exception: Players 16 and 17 years of age by the start of the tournament may roster to a team if the entire team and administrators meet all SafeSport requirements and upload their SafeSport Certification prior to roster deadline. U18 players will need signed parental consent to participate.
Visit www.ncasasoccer.org for SafeSport requirements. For assistance, email ncasa@ncsoccer.org
- Players that are under professional contract are not eligible.
- Team rosters will consist of a maximum of 22 players, including guest players.
Exception: Men's Over 65 division will play 8v8 and consist of a maximum of 18 players.
- "Tournament Only" passes are allowed in all divisions.
- Players are allowed to play in more than one Division but **can only play on one team within a Division**.
- Registration will not be allowed at the tournament.
- **Specific to the COED Division**
 - Coed teams must always have a minimum of 4 female players on the field.
 - If a team does not have 4 female players on the field of play, the team must play down a player.
- **Specific to Women's OVER 35**
 - All players in the Women's Over 35 Division must reach the age of 35 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Women's Over 35 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 34 during the calendar year of the event.
- **Specific to Men's GOLD OVER 30 & OVER 40 Divisions**
 - All players in the Men's Over 30 Division must reach the age of 30 during the calendar year of the event.
 - All players in the Men's Over 40 Division must reach the age of 40 during the calendar year of the event.
- **Specific to Men's SILVER OVER 30 & OVER 40 Divisions**
 - All players in the Men's Over 30 Division must reach the age of 30 during the calendar year of the event.
Men's Over 30 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 29 during the calendar year of the event.
 - All players in the Men's Over 40 Division must reach the age of 40 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Men's Over 40 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 39 during the calendar year of the event.
- **Specific to Men's OVER 50, OVER 55, OVER 60 and OVER 65**
 - All players in the Over 50 Division must reach the age of 50 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Men's Over 50 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 49 during the calendar year of the event.
 - All players in the Men's Over 55 Division must be at least the age of 55 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Men's Over 55 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 54 during the calendar year of the event.
 - All players in the Men's Over 60 Division must be at least the age of 60 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Men's Over 60 teams may have three underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 59 during the calendar year of the event.
 - All players in the Men's Over 65 Division must be at least the age of 65 during the calendar year of the event.
 - Men's Over 65 teams may have two underage players, each of whom must reach the age of 64 during the calendar year of the event.

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General

All matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as issued by FIFA, with the following exceptions.

Fields

To the extent possible, all matches will be played on a minimum of 65 yd x 110 yd fields. All matches will be played on fields exceeding the FIFA minimum size of 50 yds x 100 yds.

Referees

Carolinas Cup will use a USSF Assignor. All matches will be officiated by USSF certified referees. The referee must submit a match report with the score to the tournament headquarters within 15 minutes of the conclusion of each match.

Duration of Play

Two equal halves of 45 minutes will be played. There will be a 5-10-minute half time interval.

Matches may be shortened at the discretion of the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee.

8 v 8 Only

- Defensive wall must be 8 yards from the ball. Attacking player must be at least 1 yard away from the wall.
- PENALTY KICKS 10 yards from the goal line.
- No Offside or 3-Line Rule
- Two equal halves of 30 minutes will be played. There will be a 5-minute half time interval.
- Minimum field size 65yds, x 40 yds.
- Five players will constitute a team and once the referee has completed both teams' check-ins the clock will start accordingly. Less than 5 players checked in to play at 10 minutes past the scheduled start time will constitute a forfeit.

Uniforms

All team jerseys must be clearly numbered and matching. The goalkeeper's jersey must be of a different color than either team's jerseys. The HOME team, as listed on the tournament schedule, **MUST** change to alternative jerseys if there is a color conflict in the opinion of the officials. All players must wear completely covered, legal shin guards. Jewelry is not permitted to be worn on the field of play during match play.

Captains' Meeting

Team contact/captain must be present at the captain's meeting which will be held via teleconference prior to the tournament. Each team contact/captain must provide a mobile phone number where you can be reached throughout the dates of the event. If your team contact/captain (or any other designated member of your team) is unable to attend the teleconference, you must notify Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee to obtain pre-tournament information.

Team check-in for each game during the tournament will be at the pitch facilitated by the referees. Team picture rosters will be used. The Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee will provide finalized and certified picture rosters to the captains to use for check in.

Divisions Groupings

Division groupings will be determined by the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee based on the number of entries received, previous Cup results, the geographical distribution of teams, the timeliness of applications received, and league results, as well as other factors the Carolina Cup Tournament Committee may deem appropriate in specific circumstances.

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Team Check-In at the Pitch

Teams must be on time. Team check-in will take place 10 minutes prior to the start of each match. Captains have your team ready for player check-in when the referee calls for the certified picture roster. Captains must ensure correct corresponding jersey numbers for identifying the players are written on the roster. Players must comply with uniform requirements as described above in the Uniform section for equipment check.

Seven players will constitute a team and once the referee has completed both teams' check-ins the clock will start accordingly. Less than 7 players checked in to play at 10 minutes past the scheduled start time will constitute a forfeit.

Coaches and Spectators

Coaches, players, and spectators must remain between the penalty areas and at least 3 to 5 yards from the touchline. No one is permitted behind the goal lines and goals. Team's benches will occupy one side of the field. Coaching is restricted to their bench's side of the field. ALL spectators must remain on the opposite side of field from team benches.

Slide Tackling

Slide tackling is permitted in all divisions.

Substitutions

Substitutions can be made only on goal kicks, kickoffs, and possession throw-ins.

If the team in possession makes a substitution, then the referee has the discretion to allow the opposing team to substitute at the same time. An injured or cautioned player may be substituted at the referee's discretion.

Substitutions shall occur at the midfield line with the assistant referee.

Substitutes must stay off the field until the player being replaced has left the field of play.

Re-entry by substituted players is permitted

Match Play Format

Each Team will play the other teams in their designated group as scheduled. Points for bracket standings are as follows: 3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, 0 points for a loss.

Tie Breakers

Tiebreakers will be applied in the following sequence 1, 2, 3 and 4 for ranking.

1. Head-to-Head

If two teams are tied for the same ranking, the tiebreaker will be the result of the game previously played between these two; the winner will be ranked prior to the other.

2. Greatest Goal Differential

If two teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be the team with greatest goal differential. Goal Differential will be capped at a 3-goal differential per game.

3. Least Goals Allowed

If two teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be the least goals allowed.

4. Kicks from The Mark

Finally, if two teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be kicks from the mark.

A coin flip or draw lots may be used in certain circumstances such as Inclement weather.

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Three-Way Tiebreakers

1. No Head-to-Head
2. Greatest Goal Differential
3. Least Goals Allowed
4. Kicks from the Mark
 - Once the Three-way tie is reduced to two teams, the Three-Way Tiebreaker sequence continues to be followed.
 - If there needs to be a Three-Way “Kicks from the Mark”, there will be two rounds of Kicks from the Mark: the first round and the final round.
 - All three teams’ names will go into a hat.
 - The first team drawn “first team” will receive the “bye” and be considered the home team for the final round of “Kicks from the Marks.”
 - The next team drawn “second team” will kick in the first round of “Kicks from the Mark” and be considered the home team for the first round of “Kicks from the Mark.”
 - The remaining team “third team” will be considered the visitor for the first round of “Kicks from the Mark” and will call the coin toss. The second team and third team will compete in first round of “Kicks from the Mark”
 - The loser of the first round of “Kicks from the Mark” is eliminated.
 - The winner of the first round of “Kicks from the Mark” will be considered the visitor for the final round of “Kicks from the Mark” and will call the coin toss. This team and the first team drawn will compete in the final round of “Kicks from the Mark” to determine the winner of the tiebreaker.

Elimination Matches

In Quarter-final or Semi-Final matches, if applicable, “Kicks from the Mark” procedure will be used to determine the winner if the game is tied at the end of regulation. In Championship Matches, two 15-minute overtime periods will be played if the game is tied at the end of regulation. If the game is still tied after the completion of the two 15-minute overtime periods, “Kicks from the Mark” procedure will be used to determine the winner.

Forfeits

At the discretion of the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee, any team proven to be in violation of the Carolinas Cup Rules and Regulations may be subject to sanctions including but not limited to forfeiture of all games in the Carolinas Cup. Player eligibility infractions, breaches of tournament rules, failure to appear as scheduled, and team, player or coach misconduct are all subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee. Forfeits may be applied retroactively and may be applied to multiple matches or for singular matches. Forfeits are recorded as a 3-0 loss for the forfeiting team. Entry fees will not be refunded.

Teams that forfeit a match will not be eligible to advance to the Championship. The Tournament Committee may waive this provision if it determines after review that the forfeit was outside of the control of the forfeiting team.

Match Abandonment

If the match is abandoned “through no fault of either team” under 35 minutes of play, the match may need to be replayed in its entirety or resumed at the point of stoppage, subject to schedule, field availability and a Tournament Committee review.

If a match is abandoned after 35 minutes of play due to inclement weather or other uncontrollable acts, the match will be considered complete.

If a match is abandoned due to the conduct of a team in the match, the other team will automatically be awarded a win and the team engaging in the misconduct will forfeit the match. The match report will be reviewed by the Tournament Committee.

If a match must be abandoned due to the misconduct of both teams, the referee will file a complete report and the status of the match will be decided by the Tournament Committee.

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Player Send Offs

Any player sent off from a match will not be replaced. **The player cannot be within sight and sound of the field for the duration of the match from which the player was sent off.** A player issued a straight Send Off (Red Card) will automatically serve a minimum one game suspension. All straight Send Off (Red Card) will be review by the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee and the Committee may administer additional penalties or suspensions as warranted. A player who is unable to fulfill the suspension penalties during the Cup may be suspended in the next Carolinas Cup or suspended during their league play. A player issued two Cautions (Yellow Cards) thus earning a Send Off (Red Card) will be suspended for the next match. The Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee reserves the right to administer additional penalties. At the discretion of the Tournament Committee, a player under suspension may be on the team bench, but the player may not be in any playing attire.

Team Officials

Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in the Carolinas Cup Tournament Rules and Regulations, including verbal cautions, expulsions, and suspensions. Any team official under suspension must remain with the spectators on the opposite side of the field from the team bench.

Protests and Appeals

The Carolinas Cup will be overseen by a tournament committee consisting of a North Carolina Representative, a South Carolina Representative, and a neutral member. All Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee decisions are Final.

Inclement Weather

Regardless of the weather conditions, teams must appear on the field ready to play as scheduled. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the match. Only the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee in conjunction with the Match Officials may abandon or postpone a match. In case of severe weather before play, the Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee may reduce the length of the match by up to 50%. If a match is abandoned after 35 minutes due to weather, the match will be considered official, and the score will stand. Referees will not begin or continue a match when lightning is seen in the area. A **30-minute** delay will restart every time lightning strikes within 10 miles. Players and spectators are not to return to the fields until a full 30 minutes have passed without a lightning strike within 10 miles.

Fees

Entry fees must be paid in full by the application deadline.

Refund Schedule:

Full refund more than 10 days before deadline

75% refund 6-10 days before deadline

50% refund 1-5 days before deadline

No refund after the deadline

Disclaimer

The Carolinas Cup Tournament Committee reserves the right to adjust the competition format depending on the number of team entries in each division, complex issues, and weather. The tournament may even close a division due to lack of team registration. In this circumstance, the teams entered in a closed division will have the option to receive a full refund of their registration or move to another division if space is available. Neither the North Carolina Adult State Association nor the South Carolina Amateur Soccer Association will be responsible for any expenses incurred by any person, team, league, or any other association because of participating in the Carolinas Cup. **By participating in the Carolinas Cup, the team is acknowledging that team officials have read and understood the rules and that the team will abide by all the rules of the Carolinas Cup.**

THE CAROLINAS CUP'S INTENTION IS TO DETERMINE A CHAMPION FOR EACH DIVISION FROM THE VARIOUS LEAGUE SYSTEMS ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH CAROLINA. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE CAROLINAS CUP IS DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE GOOD OF THE GAME AND GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. THE CAROLINAS CUP TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE MAY SUSPEND WITHOUT RECOURSE TO APPEAL, ANY PLAYERS, TEAMS, AND/OR COACHES WHO DEMONSTRATE POOR SPORTSMANSHIP.