

Manalapan Memorial Day Soccer Tournament 2026

Official Rules of Competition

1. Sanctioning

The Manalapan Memorial Day Soccer Tournament is sanctioned by NJ Youth Soccer (NJYS) and governed by the FIFA Laws of the Game, except as modified herein. All interpretations by the Tournament Committee are final and binding.

2. Eligibility & Rosters

A. Registration and Check-In

1. All teams must complete online check-in through GotSport (or the designated system) prior to the tournament.
2. During online check-in, teams must upload the following documents:
 - Official team roster (NJYS, US Club Soccer, or other USSF affiliate)
 - Valid player passes for all rostered and guest players
 - Permission-to-travel form (for out-of-state teams, if required)
3. Each team must also bring a printed copy of the official roster and player cards to every game. Teams must present these upon request to any tournament official or referee.
4. Failure to complete check-in or provide required documentation will result in ineligibility to earn points until compliance is achieved.

B. Roster Composition

1. Each team must submit an official roster prior to the event:
 - 11v11 (U13+): up to 22 players total; no more than 18 may be in uniform per game.
 - 9v9 (U11-U12): up to 18 players total; no more than 16 may be in uniform per game.
 - 7v7 (U8-U10): up to 14 players total; no more than 14 may be in uniform per game.
2. Rosters may include rostered and guest/loan players, subject to limits:
 - 11v11 – up to 5 guests
 - 9v9 – up to 4 guests
 - 7v7 – up to 3 guests
3. Guest players must have valid player passes from the same governing body as rostered players. Secondary passes count toward guest limits.
4. Once check-in is complete, rosters are frozen and may not be changed without Tournament Committee approval.

C. Uniform Numbers & Identification

1. Each rostered player must have a unique uniform number listed on the roster matching the game jersey.
2. Uniform changes must be reported to the referee prior to kickoff.
3. Only players listed on the approved roster may be present in the technical area wearing team uniforms.

D. Player Eligibility Rules

1. Players may play for only one team in the tournament — regardless of age group or division.
2. If a player appears on multiple rosters:
 - The first team they play for will be deemed their primary team.
 - The player will be barred from further participation in the tournament.
 - Any team using such an ineligible player will forfeit all affected games and may face further sanctions.
3. Teams must ensure all players meet age requirements. Use of an over-age player results in forfeiture of all games where that player participated.

E. Documentation Requirements at the Field

1. A coach or team official must have at every game:
 - The official printed roster
 - Player passes for all rostered and guest players
 - Medical release forms (available upon request)
2. 'No Pass – No Play' is strictly enforced. Players without valid cards may not participate.
3. Referees or field marshals may verify roster and player passes at any time. Teams failing verification cannot play until compliant.

3. Fields & Equipment

Field sizes follow US Youth Soccer standards where possible. Home team (listed first) changes jerseys in the event of color conflict. Ball size: U8–U12 = Size 4, U13+ = Size 5. All players must wear shinguards fully covered by socks.

Player-safety rule:

- No jewelry, watches, or metal hair accessories.
- Hard casts, splints, or braces made of leather, rubber, plastic, plaster, or fiberglass must be fully padded (minimum ½-inch high-density foam) or equivalent. The referee has final authority to determine if any equipment is safe.
- Spectators must remain on the opposite side of the field from teams and never behind the goals.
- No pets, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products are permitted at any field.

4. Game Duration

7v7 (U8–U10): 2×25 min (Size 4 ball)
9v9 (U11–U12): 2×25 min (Size 4 ball)
11v11 (U13+): 2×30 min (Size 5 ball)

Five-minute halftime; running clock; no stoppage time. Preliminary games may end in ties. Championship or playoff games tied at the end of regulation will be decided by kicks from the penalty mark (no overtime).

5. Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions allowed, with referee approval, at any goal, goal kick, throw-in, corner kick, or injury stoppage; at the start of any half or overtime; or following a caution for the cautioned player.

6. Build-Out Line (U8–U10)

- When the goalkeeper has possession or a goal/free kick is taken inside the penalty area, opponents must retreat behind the build-out line until the ball is in play.
- Goalkeepers may pass, throw or roll the ball to put it back in play (no punts or drop kicks).
- On a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands, the opposing team may cross the build-out line when:
 - The goalkeeper changes possession from their hand to play the ball with their feet, or
 - A second touch is made by another player on the goalkeeper's team, or
 - The ball comes to a complete stop, or
 - The ball crosses the build-out line
- Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build-out line. However, the goalkeeper can 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.
- Coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by an opponent not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the build-out line prior to the ball being put into play.
- Referees may penalize delay or encroachment.
- Any time restraints on goalkeepers should not begin until all opponents have moved behind the build-out line.

7. Scoring & Standings

Teams earn points as follows:

- Win = 3 points
- Tie = 1 point
- Loss = 0 points
- Shutout Win = +1 bonus point (0-0 ties and forfeits excluded)

Tiebreakers (applied in order, but see below regarding Mercy Rule):

1. Head-to-head result (only applied when two teams are tied)
 - When *only two teams* are tied in points, use the head-to-head result between those two teams.
 - When three or more teams are tied, and Head-to-head cannot eliminate one of the teams (i.e. one team beat the other teams that are tied) skip head-to-head and go straight to next criteria
2. Goal differential (max +5 per game)

- Capped at a maximum +5 per game to discourage running up scores
3. Goals scored (max +5 per game)
 4. Fewest goals allowed (max +5 per game)
 5. Fewest disciplinary points (yellow = 1, red = 2)
 6. Kicks from the Penalty Mark (at a field and time determined by the Tournament Director often before semifinals/finals)

In the event three or more teams are tied, the above criteria will be applied in order until one team is eliminated, and then the process will restart at Step 1 among the remaining tied teams until all positions are determined.

8. Flight Format Policy

5-Team Flights

All five (5) teams play in a single bracket. Each team plays four (4) matches against four different opponents within the group. The division champion, runner-up and third place finishers are determined by total points and, if necessary, tournament tiebreakers. There is no championship final or consolation game. All teams are guaranteed and limited to four (4) total games.

6-Team Flights

Six-team flights are divided into two brackets of three teams each (Bracket A and Bracket B). Each team plays three (3) preliminary games against the teams in the opposing brackets. Following preliminary play, each team will play a placement match as its fourth and final game:

- 1st and 2nd of Entire Flight → Championship Final
- 3rd and 4th of Entire Flight → Third-Place Match
- 5th and 6th of Entire Flight → Fifth-Place Match

All teams are guaranteed and limited to four (4) games. If the Final and 3rd Place games end in a tie, the champion and 3rd place winner will be determined by kicks from the penalty mark.

8-Team Flights

Eight-team flights are divided into two brackets of four teams each (Bracket A and Bracket B). Each team plays three (3) preliminary games within its bracket. After preliminary play, all teams will play a placement match as their fourth and final game:

- 1st in A vs 1st in B → Championship Final
- 2nd in A vs 2nd in B → Third-Place Match
- 3rd in A vs 3rd in B → Fifth-Place Match
- 4th in A vs 4th in B → Seventh-Place Match

All teams are guaranteed and limited to four (4) games. If the Final and 3rd Place games end in a tie, the champion and 3rd place winner will be determined by kicks from the penalty mark.

In the rare circumstances there are flights where the number of teams are not listed above, the Tournament Committee will determine the appropriate structure of such flights.

9. Failure to Show and Forfeits

A team shall be allowed a 10-minute grace period after the scheduled kick-off in the preliminary rounds before the match is awarded to their opponent. Minimum players: 7 (11v11) | 6 (9v9) | 5 (7v7) shall constitute a team. If said minimum number of players are present, the match may not be delayed. If during the course of the match a team falls below the minimum number of players, the game will be forfeited to the opponent. Forfeited match = 1-0 win. A team that has forfeited a game may not advance to the finals. If an apparent group winner forfeits, the group team with the next best record will be declared the group winner. Teams that forfeit may be removed from further competition.

10. Mercy Rule

TO PROMOTE SPORTSMANSHIP AND BALANCE: COACHES MUST MANAGE GAMES TO AVOID LOPSIDED SCORELINES. ANY TEAM THAT WINS BY MORE THAN SIX (6) GOALS WILL FORFEIT ALL TIEBREAKERS FOR GROUP-STAGE STANDINGS OR ADVANCEMENT.

The win and match points remain, but that team is automatically placed last in any tiebreak sequence. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action by the Tournament Committee.

11. Conduct, Discipline & Referee Abuse Policy

All participants must display sportsmanship and respect. Dissent or abusive language toward referees, players, or opponents is prohibited. Anyone ejected must leave the field area immediately; play is suspended until compliance. Red-carded individuals = minimum 1-game suspension; violent conduct = 3-game suspension (reportable to NJYS). If a coach is coaching more than one team, and is red carded, they are suspended from coaching any team until they clear the one (1) game suspension with the team they received the red card with.

Sideline Conduct: Teams/coaches share one sideline; spectators occupy the opposite side. Only rostered coaches (max 3 per team) may remain in the technical area. Coaches are accountable for spectator behavior. Referees may caution or eject a coach for spectator misconduct. Persistent violations may result in match termination, forfeiture, or removal from the tournament.

Referee Abuse Policy: Zero Tolerance — any verbal abuse, intimidation, or physical contact toward referees by a coach, player, parent, or spectator results in immediate dismissal from the facility and potential team suspension. Referee decisions are final. Misconduct reports are reviewed by the Tournament Director. Physical or threatening behavior will be referred to the NJYS Disciplinary Committee.

12. Golf Cart Policy

Only authorized personnel may operate golf carts. Operators must be at least 18 years old and hold a valid driver's license. Passengers must remain seated; no riders in cargo areas. All body parts must remain inside the vehicle while moving. Drivers must operate at safe speeds, especially near pedestrians, parking lots, or fields. Reduce speed on turns, slopes,

and in wet conditions. Keys must be removed and parking brake set when unattended. Carts may not be driven under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Carts must be returned to designated areas after use.

13. Weather & Scheduling Policy

The Tournament Committee may shorten, reschedule, or relocate games for safety reasons. If one half or more has been played, the match is official. If the event is canceled before play begins, teams receive at least a 70% refund; refunds or credits for partial cancellations are at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.

14. Awards

For all divisions and flights, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams will receive placement medals. For U8-U10 divisions, those teams that do not place in their flight will receive participation medals. Participation medals will not be provided to those teams that place 1st through 3rd in their flight. Awards distributed at field HQ following final standings confirmation.

15. Protests & Appeals

No protests or appeals are permitted. Referee and Tournament Committee decisions are final.

16. Miscellaneous Policies

No one permitted behind goal lines. Alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and pets (except service animals which must be properly marked) are prohibited. The Tournament Committee has final authority over all matters not specifically addressed herein and may make exceptions to any of the rules above if it believes it is in the best interest of the Tournament.