



2026 State Cup Invitational Championship

11u and 12u 9v9 Competition Rules

The Maryland State Youth Soccer Association in support from the US Youth National Office will be holding a State Cup Invitational Event for champions or designated teams from their state association competition for 11u and 12u 9v9 tournament to support the development of the small sided game. The invitational 11u and 12u and under Small Sided Competition is defined as 9-v-9 competition.

The 11u and 12u Small Sided Competition will be conducted under the existing 2025-2026 NCS and Presidents Cup competition rules with the following modifications:

1. 11u and 12u 9v9 competition is played with eight (8) field players and a goalkeeper for each team. It is recommended that all 11u and 12u 9v9 competitions be played on a field that has the field dimension recommended by US Youth Soccer.
 - 9 v 9 field of play: 70 – 80 yards length, 45 – 55
 - goals should be no larger than 7 feet in height and 21 feet in width with a
 - minimum of 6.5 feet in height and 18.5 feet in width.
2. All 11u and 12u 9v9 teams must be registered with their State Association.
3. Teams advancing to this event should be their 11u or 12u State Association champion or designated team.
4. An 11u and 12u 9v9 team may have a maximum of up to 16 players on its roster. Teams must have at least 50% of their State Cup roster on this event roster but can add club pass players and five players from other clubs as long as that player's team has been eliminated at the state level. The State Association is responsible for approving the event roster.
5. A game may not start with fewer than six properly uniformed players on each team. Once started, games may not continue with fewer than six players per team. If a game cannot start or is stopped because a team has fewer than six players, that team shall forfeit the game. A team shall have a 10-minute grace period from the scheduled starting time before a forfeit is declared.
6. Heading: Players in 11u age group are not permitted to head the ball in any match.
7. Each player and team official participating in the event must carry a current US Youth Soccer member pass, which must include a recent photograph and signature. Passes can be either electronic or laminated cards issued by the State Association.
8. Match duration will be Two 30-minute halves. Knockout round matches (Semi-Finals and Finals) will proceed directly to Penalty Kicks, if tied, with no extra time played.
9. Substitutions: Unlimited substitutions over three moments per half plus halftime.