

MSA RULE 103: Programs

I. RECREATIONAL SOCCER

Purpose: Recreational Soccer is the entry level for boys and girls playing on Under 4 through Under 18 teams and/or Under 19 teams. It is the recreational playing division which U.S. Youth Soccer requires its State Associations to provide.

A. Program: To be considered a Recreational program, it must be open to all players and meet the following additional requirements:

1. Conduct player registrations in accordance with MSA Rules & Guidelines
2. Make player assignments to teams in accordance with MSA Rules & Guidelines
3. Accept all eligible youths desiring to play the game in the member organization, subject to reasonable terms of registration.
4. Adjust the composition of its teams each seasonal year to ensure a competitive balance between all teams that would routinely play against each other in the member's recreational program. Player age variance on each team is required as well. Organizations must publicize spring registration procedures to ensure that all fall registrants are advised of the new season and makes restoring team strength the responsibility of league.
5. Establish a written policy governing the players' rights to "play up" in a higher age group than their bona fide age group. This policy should include specific decision-making criteria if policy requires consideration on a case-by-case basis.
6. Players registered or participating on a team at a higher level than recreational soccer in a separate USSF association may NOT be added to a MSA recreational roster for any reason.

B. Objectives: Registered teams are formed for the express purpose of teaching the necessary playing abilities and skills of the game; maximum game and practice participation of each rostered player, physical and mental fitness, and the enjoyment of the game. Recreational teams are not formed to play competitive level soccer. All programs in the Under 4 – Under 8 age divisions shall play 4 v 4 play. Single year age divisions shall be used whenever possible for 4U – 8U. 10U and above shall be played in dual age groups. Boys' and girls' programs should be separated whenever possible. Under special circumstances girls may be allowed to play in the boys' division. For additional details, refer to MSA Rules & Guidelines regarding Small Sided Games.

C. Sanction for Violation of Rules: Failure to comply with the "Rules for Registration of Youth Players" shall result in the offending coach, assistant coach, manager/trainer and/or team representative, and players being suspended from MSA soccer activities for a period of not less than one (1) year.

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II. REC-PLUS SOCCER

Purpose: The Rec-Plus level is the developmental and all-star division designed to result in a more competitive level of play for our recreational players.

A. **Program:**

Organizations must meet the following requirements as a full member of MSA to form Rec-Plus level teams:

1. Rec-Plus teams shall:
 - a. form through a tryout or signup process,
 - b. only contain current registered recreational players within a MSA organization,
 - c. not require player age variance.
2. The local organization shall determine the most appropriate assignment of players to these teams. There is no requirement for the composition of the teams to be adjusted to insure a competitive balance between multiple teams.
3. More than one player pool in any age division may be formed.
4. Official Rec-Plus Rosters or Event Rosters shall not be formed within an organization until after December 1st of each season AND all Recreational teams are formed and registered in the MSA online registration system.
5. Any Rec-Plus team forming prior to December 1st of each season shall:
 - a. Be re-classified as a Competitive team.
 - b. Have all players removed from their current recreational teams by transferring said players to the Competitive team. The remaining recreational players may be redrafted or teams adjusted as needed by the local organization.
 - c. For these recreational teams having to adjust rosters based on Rule 103.II.A.5 above AND wishing to compete in MSA District Tournaments, the roster size of the recreational team will be :
 - i. field players +2 or
 - ii. the original # of active players on the spring roster; whichever is larger.
 - d. Any movement of players under section 103.II.A.5 must be completed by the MSA State Registrar or designated MSA Staff Member only.
6. Any Rec-Plus team(s) properly registered and formed in accordance with MSA rules & guidelines may compete in the MSA Elite Cup.

B. **Objectives:**

This program is played in single age groups, 9U through 19U. However, organizations may choose to form in dual age groups if sufficient player are not available to form in single age groups but will be required to compete in the older age group.

1. All Rec-Plus teams must be rostered within 15 days of December 1st or completion of spring tryouts/sign -ups, whichever comes first.
2. If an organization does not offer Rec-Plus soccer, the player may tryout in another organization offering a Rec-Plus program. If this organization is different from the organization in which the player is registered to play Recreational soccer, the player's first obligation is to compete with its Recreational team during its regularly

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scheduled play. Violation of this rule will result in the player being removed from the Rec-Plus team for the remainder of the season. No Rec- Plus Releases will be approved until after December 1st of each season.

3. Player pools may not be registered in the MSA online registration system prior to December 1st of each season.
4. All Rec-Plus teams must obtain MSA passes for all players, coaches, and managers of the team.
5. Travel permits are not required by MSA. Should the tournament require a travel permit for the event, the team should request this within 72 hours of the event at no charge to the team. Any travel permit requested after the 72-hour deadline will be charged \$20 for expediting.

- C. Sanction for Violation of Rules:** Failure to comply with the “Rules for Registration of Youth Players” shall result in the offending coach, assistant coach, manager/trainer and/or team representative, and players being suspended from MSA soccer activities for a period of not less than one (1) year.

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III. COMPETITIVE SOCCER

Program: Competitive Soccer is the highest level of competition. The program is designed to enhance player development and increase soccer knowledge through high level training and competition. The Competitive program prepares players to compete at regional and national levels of competition.

A. Program: Competitive teams must meet the following requirements:

1. Competitive teams may range in age/gender divisions from 9U – 19U.
2. Competitive 13U-18U team(s) may participate in the MSA Competitive Soccer League with the approval of their Club DOC/President. Only MSA approved Competitive teams may compete in the Southern Regional Premier League.
3. To qualify for MSA Premier Cup, teams must compete in the MCSL or SRPL. The only exception is the 19U age/gender division.
4. All Competitive teams participating in the MCSL or SRPL **MUST** compete in the MSA Premier Cup.
 - a. Exception: a waiver may be granted by the MCSL Commission, based on the team's performance in the MCSL, to forgo participation in the MSA Premier Cup.
 - b. If granted, the team would be allowed to participate in the MSA Elite Cup.
 - c. The waiver must be requested via email to the MCSL Chair and Co-Chair within one (1) week of completion of the MCSL season to be considered.
5. **Roster Completion:**
 - a. Competitive teams 13U-19U participating in the MCSL or SRPL must be formed and rostered in the MSA online registration system no later than the second Monday in August prior to the new season. The only exception is 19U teams not competing in MCSL/SRPL. Team(s) not meeting this deadline will not be eligible to compete in the MCSL, SRPL, or MSA Premier Cup.
 - b. Competitive team(s) not participating in the MCSL or SRPL may compete in the MSA Elite Cup.
 - c. Competitive 13U – older teams must be registered in the MSA online registration system no later than the first Monday in October to be eligible to participate in the MSA Elite Cup.
 - d. Competitive teams 9U – 12U may register as pools to allow continued player development. The word “pool” must be a part of the team name. All pools must be converted to teams and input into the online registration system by a deadline pre-determined by the MSA Council each season. Those not meeting this deadline will not be eligible for the MSA Elite Cup.
6. **Alterations:** Should USYSA lower age divisions for competition to the Regional and National Championship Series, the age groups encompassed by the USYSA changes shall be automatically adopted by the MSA Competitive Program in all its respective rules and policies.
7. **Team and Player Registration:**
 - a. All registered Competitive players and teams must meet USYSA/MSA registration policy requirements.
 - b. Any 19U team(s) forming to compete in the Premier Cup or Regional tournament play must have roster(s) submitted no later

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- than 14 days prior to the MSA Premier Cup.
- c. Any previously non-rostered player(s) may be added to a Competitive team roster up until 12:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to the MSA Premier Cup.
8. **Transfers:** A player transfer is defined as the permanent movement of a currently rostered player to another existing roster.
- a. The initiator of the player transfer **shall** be the parent/guardian of the player requesting the transfer. Through the E-movement system, the initiator must submit and receive approval of the online *MSA Request for Transfer*. A player who fails to receive a response to the *Request for Transfer* from their current organization within seventy-two (72) hours of their documented request, shall be transferred directly by MSA in accordance with MSA rules.
 - b. Internal movement (within an organization) of a Competitive player to another competitive team may be handled through the Club Pass movement by the club registrar.
 - c. A team shall be limited to a total of five (5) transferred players per seasonal year. A player shall be limited to a total of one (1) transfer per seasonal year.
 - d. A rostered player in member organization may transfer to a team in another member organization based on Rule 103.3.A.8.a.
 - e. A registered player may transfer to a Competitive team based on Rule 103.3.A.8.a.
 - f. Player Transfers are permanent for the seasonal year. The player becomes the permanent player resource for the gaining team's member.
 - g. **Transfers for League Play:** Per USYSA Rules - The MSA Registrar or designated MSA Staff must approve all Competitive player transfers at least fourteen (14) days prior to the affected player participating in any interstate/ intrastate games and MSA sponsored competition including the MSA Competitive Soccer League and the Mississippi Premier Cup. Previously rostered players on a Competitive team may not participate in league games within 14 days of being transferred onto the team. Recreational or previously non-rostered players added to a Competitive team may participate in league play irrespective of the 14-day wait period.
9. **Team Selection Process:** A member organization can form its competitive teams through any selection process provided it adheres to the following tryout rules:
- a. Tryout advertisements may not exclude players due to their race, creed, gender or playing ability. Tryout advertisements must be conducted in a manner to reach all potential players within the organization's territory. Any tryout advertisements outside of an organization's designated territory must be through mediums that will reach all potential players and not just a select few. Phone calls or text messages by any organization member or team representative to potential players or parents may never be used to promote tryouts. The only exception to this type of contact are those players registered to the team during the current season.
 - b. Tryouts must be advertised throughout its designated territory and open to all interested registered players within its territorial boundaries.
 - c. Tryouts for the upcoming season may not be held until the Monday following the conclusion of the MSA Premier Cup.

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- d. Tryouts must occur and conclude prior to team roster assignments of Recreation and Rec-Plus players. Non-selected participants may then exercise their options:
 - Players may try out for a Competitive team in another member organization.
 - Players may register with an organization's Recreation team and tryout for the Rec-Plus player distribution pool.
 - e. A team formed through this process will remain a Competitive team until it either disbands or receives MSA Council approval of its petition for re-designation as a Recreation or Rec-Plus team.
10. The MSA Registrar or the designated MSA staff must approve and register all new player assignments to Competitive teams at least fourteen (14) days prior to the affected player(s) participating in any MSA sponsored competition including the MSA Competitive League and the Mississippi Premier Cup.
 11. No organization may require a player to sign any registration form, or other document that seeks to bind the player to that organization prior to being accepted in writing to that team or teams for which the player is trying out for. No registration is accomplished until all MSA required registration fees, and/or transfers are received and approved by MSA, subject to any MSA deadlines.
 12. **Roster Freeze Date:**
 - a. Per USYS rules: Rosters shall be frozen at close of business 14 days prior to the MSA Premier Cup for all participating Competitive registered players.
 - b. Any recreational or previously non-registered player may be added to a participating Competitive roster by 12:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the MSA Premier Cup and be allowed to participate in the MSA Premier Cup irrespective of the 14-day rule for competitive players.
 - c. Competitive team rosters shall be frozen at close of business 14 days prior to the MSA Elite Cup for participating Competitive registered players.
 - d. Any recreational or previously non-registered player may be added to a participating Competitive roster by 12:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the MSA Elite Cup and be allowed to participate in the MSA Elite Cup irrespective of the 14-day rule for competitive players.

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13. Club Pass:

- a. Club Pass policies are to help clubs afford opportunities for player development. The Club Pass process permits clubs to temporarily move Competitive & Rec-Plus players from one of their teams to another within their respective club. It creates opportunities for players to participate on different teams-at various levels of competition. As a practical matter, the Club Pass process also helps clubs fill roster spots occasioned by injury or other player absences.
- b. Clubs may not utilize more than 3 Club Pass players for MCSL (13U-18U) play during any given weekend of play or game day. No player may participate on his/her primary team during MCSL league play AND be a club pass player on another team during the same weekend/day of play. The level of play of the player's primary team will determine the level of play for the player. The roster showing the club pass player(s) will be presented to the Game Officials along with the team's official Game Card/Roster prior to each game.
- d. Players may be Club Passed for league play and/or for play in the MSA Premier Cup. A Club Pass player in MCSL play does not guarantee a Club Pass for that same player will be approved for play in a State Tournament. No more than 3 Club Pass players may be used for the MSA Premier Cup event. No player may participate on his/her primary team during the Premier Cup AND be a club pass player on another team during the same weekend/day of play. To Club Pass a player for any MSA Premier Cup event, a request must be submitted, with approval of the Club DOC, to and completed by the MSA Office staff. Players shall not play on their Club Pass (New) team until approval is obtained and the roster change is completed.
- e. **Deadlines:**
 - i. **For the MSA Premier Cup** - Club Pass Requests must be submitted to the MSA Office, with the club DOC/President approval, for any player(s) no later than 12:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to the beginning of the event.
 - ii. **For the MSA Elite Cup** - Club Pass Requests must be submitted to the MSA Office with the club DOC/President approval, for any player(s) no later than 12:00 pm on the Tuesday prior to the beginning of the event.
- f. Regional Events – a constant of 9 players must be carried from the league roster to Premier Cup to the Region III Regional or Regional Presidents Cup events. Teams attending the Regional Presidents Cup event may Club Pass players from any club if the player(s) was registered with MSA on roster freeze date for the MSA Premier Cup. Teams attending the Region III Regional Event may Club Pass players from within their own club if the player(s) was registered with MSA and the club on roster freeze date for the MSA Premier Cup.

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14. **Sanction for Violation of Rules:** Failure to comply with the “Rules for Registration of Youth Players” shall result in the offending coach, assistant coach, manager/trainer and/or team representative, and players being suspended from MSA soccer activities for a period of not less than one (1) year.