

SAYPREMIER SOCCER **ORGANIZATIONAL RULES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SAY PREMIER SOCCER PHILOSOPHY

RULE 1	AGE CLASSIFICATION
RULE 2	OFFICIAL SEASON
RULE 3	SAYPREMIER PROGRAMS
RULE 4	SAYPREMIER LEAGUES
RULE 5	SAYPREMIER PLAYER AGREEMENTS
RULE 6	SAYPREMIER COACHES
RULE 7	LEGAL TEAM
RULE 8	PROTESTS
RULE 9	SAYPREMIER SUPERVISION
RULE 10	PLAYER PARTICIPATION
RULE 11	SAYPREMIER VARIATIONS
RULE 12	SAYPREMIER TOURNAMENTS
RULE 13	SAYPREMIER SYSTEM OF OFFICIATING

SAYPREMIER SOCCER PLAYING RULES **THE LAWS OF THE GAME** **GENERAL PREFACE**

SAYPREMIER SOCCER ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

SAYPREMIER SOCCER PHILOSOPHY

1. The Soccer Association for Youth (SAY) was formed to provide an organization within which children could learn and play soccer, the world's most popular sport. The fact that any size player can be successful at the game and the modest expense required to field a team make it possible for many children to participate in organized competition. These factors, plus the enthusiasm of the children once they have played the game, have resulted in a rapid growth of the SAY Program.
2. **SAYPremier Soccer is an extension of the basic SAY recreational program in that it provides an additional platform in which players may enhance and develop their soccer skills in a more competitive atmosphere.**
3. It is the function of **SAYPremier Soccer**
 - A. to provide:
 - (1) an organizational structure to **assist in the formation of a premier youth soccer program, to** form leagues and to schedule games,
 - (2) guidance and instructions for **all of its participants, i.e. players, coaches, officials and administrators,**
 - B. to prescribe rules and regulations which will ensure safe, enjoyable and fair competition.
4. Several of the **SAYPremier Soccer** regulations presented in **these Organizational Rules** have been written specifically to implement this philosophy, as far as practicable. The overall objective of **SAYPremier Soccer** is maximum participation with even competition at the various age levels.

RULE 1 – AGE CLASSIFICATION

1. Age divisions for **SAYPremier Programs** are broken down as follows:

DIVISION	AGE
U-8	6 & 7
U-10	8 & 9
U-11	10
U-12	11
U-13	12
U-14	13
U-15	14
U-16	15
U-17	16
U-18	17
U-19	18

2. ALL CLASSES

- A. The lower age must be reached and the higher age not exceeded prior to **August 1** of the current “playing year”. “Playing year”, as it is used here, will commence on **August 1 and end on July 31**.
- B. **Each SAYPremier Program** is responsible for verification of the age of **their** players and the appropriate **registration of players** on teams.
- C. If the age of a player is challenged, the coach must submit the player’s birth certificate or equivalent proof of age to the appropriate **SAYPremier Program Team Committee representative**.
- D. The intent of establishing the **one-year age** classifications is to make competition as even as possible.
- E. **Many leagues within a SAYPremier Program may not** have sufficient players to make up teams **using the preferred one-year age** divisions.
- (1) **As an alternate, teams could be divided into two-year groupings (maximum) consisting of U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 and U18 divisions.**
- (2) If such **two-year age division** teams play against standard **one-year age division** teams, they **shall be** classified according to the oldest age on the team.
- G. A player may play in the next older Age-Division, if and only if:
- (1) A parent requests, in writing, that his/her child play in the next older Age-Division, AND
- (2) such a player assignment is **only to be** made with the written approval of the **SAYPremier Program Team Committee representative**.
- H. Upon approval by the **SAYPremier Program and the registration** of the player to a team, there shall be no limitation on the participation of that team with other **SAYPremier Programs**.

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

RULE 2 – OFFICIAL SEASON

1. The official season(s) of a given **SAYPremier Program** will be specified by the **SAYPremier Program’s** governing body, or by agreement among **SAYPremier Programs**, if there are two or more **SAYPremier Programs** playing together.
 - A. **Spring Season:**
Any playing season beginning between January 1 and June 30 will be officially considered a “Spring” season.
 - B. **Fall Season:**
Any playing season beginning between July 1 and December 31 will be officially considered a “Fall” season.
2. A **SAYPremier Program** may choose to play either:
 - A. A single-season format, i.e. Fall season only or Spring season only
..... or
 - B. A two-season format , i.e. Spring season and a separate Fall season

RULE 3 – SAYPREMIER PROGRAMS

1. Boundaries of each **SAYPremier Program** shall be contiguous as established by the individual **SAYPremier Program**, and correspondingly approved by **SAYPremier Soccer**.
2. Each **SAYPremier Program** will elect a governing board, establish by-laws and will be responsible for overseeing and administering the overall operation of the program within the **SAYPremier Soccer** rules and philosophy.
3. **Player’s Options:**
 - A. Players may register and agree to play for any team that has chosen to select them to participate.
 - B. Once a player’s choice has been made and the player is officially registered with a team, that player is committed to the team for that “playing season”, i.e. spring or fall.
 - C. Players are free to register with another team only after the official “playing season”, as defined in **SAYPremier Soccer Organizational Rule 2**, is completed.

RULE 4 – SAYPREMIER LEAGUES

1. **Leagues within a SAYPremier Program should be formed into single-age division teams wherever possible.**
2. **In situations where teams from different age divisions must be combined due to lack of participating teams, a SAYPremier Program league may combine no more than two age divisions (and this would not require that all other age divisions be combined accordingly).**

RULE 5 – SAYPREMIER PLAYER AGREEMENTS

1. A player must be **officially registered with the SAYPremier Program** and under agreement with a team before **being eligible to participate in any sanctioned event, i.e. practice or games.**
2. **The player agreement shall state that, as a member of a SAYPremier Program, said player will:**
 - A. participate within the rules and spirit of the **SAYPremier Program**
 - B. participate on only one specific **SAYPremier Soccer** team for one entire season.

NOTE: Participation on any other non-SAYPremier Soccer team or any other organized sports team is not prohibited, e.g. playing on an SAYArea recreational team and on a SAYPremier Soccer team is permissible.
3. To assure that only properly **registered** players are on a team, the head coach of each team shall send both:
 - A. the team roster, and
 - B. a copy of each player agreement to the **SAYPremier Program Registrar**, as soon as the team is organized, and in no case later than the day before the team's first scheduled game.

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

RULE 6 – SAYPREMIER COACHES

1. A maximum of three (3) coaches will be **registered and** recognized as official for each **SAYPremier Program** team; a Head Coach and two Assistant Coaches, whose names shall appear on the team roster.
 - A. The Head Coach must be at least eighteen years of age.
 - B. At least one of the registered coaches must be present during all team practices and games. This does not preclude the use of many more coaching assistants at practices.
 - C. **The SAY “Times Two Policy” policy also requires that no less than two adults be present at all team functions. Under no circumstances should any SAYPremier Program activity, which includes games and practices, take place if only one adult is present.**
2. The **SAYPremier Program** is responsible for the correctness of the player’s age and address as shown on the player’s **registration form**.
PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.
3. At each game,
 - A. Player cards with a picture ID shall be presented to the Referee prior to each game.
 - B. The coach will have a copy of the team roster, which may be examined by the opposing coach only if this request is made before the start of the game (i.e. not during the game, not at half-time, nor after the match has been completed).
 - C. The referee may examine either team’s roster at any time before, during, or immediately after a match, but in doing so the Referee must also check the rosters of both teams.
 - D. In the event that a coach does not have a copy of the team roster at a game, the referees shall permit the game to proceed but the incident must be reported to the SAYPremier Program Director..
4. **It is required that all coaches, i.e. the Head Coach and the Assistant Coaches successfully complete a certified concussion awareness training. A certificate of completion must be available at all times when serving as a coach in the SAYPremier Program.**
5. It is desired that all head coaches:
 - A. be certified by the NSCAA, or
 - B. be licensed by U.S.S.F., or
 - C. have received training as approved by the **SAY National Director of Coaching**.
6. It is recommended that all coaches:
 - A. have in their possession medical release consent slips for each **registered team** player at all practices, games and other team functions for emergency use;

- B. use only positive reinforcement and encouragement with players during all practices and games; and
- C. refrain from negative remarks during practices and games.

RULE 7 – LEGAL TEAM

1. General Provisions

- A. Team Size: (11 v. 11)
 - (1) As a general rule, a team must have no fewer than eleven (11) players.
 - (2) There should be an adequate number of substitutes so that players can be rested, but not so many that players cannot get a significant amount of playing time.
 - (3) The optimum maximum team size is fifteen (15) or sixteen (16) players.
- B. For age divisions playing short-sided games the provisions for the number of players assigned to the teams, as outlined in Section 1A above, should be modified accordingly to provide for maximum player participation.
- C. Players may not be added to a team's roster after league play has ended.
- D. No player listed on a **SAYPremier Soccer** roster may **be registered** on any other **SAYPremier Soccer** team during the same **SAYPremier Soccer playing season**.
- E. **Guest players, as may be defined by the SAYPremier Program, are permitted on teams during tournament play only. No guest player policy is permitted for league play.**

PUNISHMENT: Forfeiture of any game in which an ineligible player participates.

2. SAYPremier Soccer Authority to Form Teams

- A. Each **SAYPremier Program** is authorized to **form teams, as well as team and league assignments** within its own geographic boundaries or for its own membership in accordance with these **SAYPremier Soccer Organizational Rules**.
- B. **Tryouts or any other similar selection process may be used** to determine if a child is to be invited to play on a **SAYPremier Soccer** team.

3. SAYPremier Team Committee

- A. The governing body of each **SAYPremier Program** will form a Team Committee, the chairman of which shall be a member of the

SAYPremier Program's governing body. Other members of the Team Committee would be as defined in the **SAYPremier Program's By-Laws**.

- B. The **SAYPremier Program** Team Committee will:
- (1) supervise within the **SAYPremier Program with regard to:**
 - (a) registration of players,
 - (b) formation of teams,
 - (c) formation of leagues; and
 - (2) receive, investigate, and report their findings to the governing body of the **SAYPremier Program** for action when any challenge of the eligibility of any team or player is made at any time by any:
 - (a) Head Coach or
 - (b) **SAYPremier Program** Representative; and
 - (3) perform any other duties that may be assigned to it from time to time by the governing body of the **SAYPremier Program**.

4. **Illegal Team and Ineligible Player Protests**

- A. A protest concerning an illegal team or ineligible player:
 - (1) May be made at any time, by any person, and
 - (2) Does not require the payment of the **\$100.00** official protest fee noted in **SAYPremier Soccer Organizational Rule 8**.
- B. If it is determined that an illegal team, or that an ineligible or illegal player has participated in a game, that game shall be declared a forfeit.
- C. The forfeit penalty will apply not only to the game that originated the protest, but also to all games in which the illegal team or ineligible/illegal player participated.

RULE 8 – PROTESTS

1. Judgment calls by referees may not be protested. For example, no official protest may be made concerning the referee's judgment as to:
 - A. who committed the foul, or whether a foul was intentional or even committed;
 - B. whether a goal was or was not scored;
 - C. which team should be awarded the ball when the ball goes out of play over the goal-lines or the touch-lines;
 - D. allowing or failing to allow an "advantage", etc.
2. An official protest concerning a particular game and any incidents which occurred during that game may be lodged by the Head Coach, or an assistant coach, when the Head Coach is not present, **ONLY** if it is alleged that a **PLAYING LAW** was incorrectly applied or enforced by the referee. For example:
 - A. awarding a penalty kick for a dangerous play or unsporting behavior;

- B. allowing a team to play with eleven players after a player has been ejected during the course of the game, etc.
3. Official Protest Procedure:
- A. An informal, but official, verbal protest must be made to the referee(s) by the Head Coach, or an assistant coach, when the Head Coach is not present, at (preferably) or close to, the time of the incident; but in all cases, it must be made before the referee(s) have left the playing area.
 - B. A simple or vague complaint about a call or calls will not suffice – the words “official protest” must be used, and the reason for the protest must be made clear. (If this is done at the time of the incident, a mistake by a referee can often be easily rectified without the need for any further action.) Any coach who has made an official verbal protest may withdraw that protest at any time.
 - C. The opposing coach must be notified of the protest by the referee.
 - D. The informal verbal protest must be followed by submission of a formal, written official protest,
 - (1) Delivered to the **SAYPremier Program Director**
 - (2) By midnight of the following day,
 - (3) Accompanied by a fee **\$100, or a fee as set by the SAYPremier Program**, which will be refunded if the official protest is allowed, and retained if the official protest is disallowed.
 - E. Protests must be decided by the **SAYPremier Program’s** governing body or the **SAYPremier Program’s** Protest Committee.
 - F. A decision regarding an official written protest must be rendered within seventy-two (72) hours of its reception and the decision must be transmitted in writing to both coaches in a timely manner.
 - G. Official protest decisions made by the governing body of an **SAYPremier Program** are FINAL and may not be appealed to the National Board of Directors or the SAY National Office.
 - H. A report of each official protest should be submitted to the SAY National Office within 30 days.
4. If an official protest is allowed, the ruling body shall determine the corrective action required with the understanding that in most situations the game shall be replayed from the time of the incident.

RULE 9 – SAYPREMIER SUPERVISION

1. Subject to these **SAYPremier Organizational Rules**, each **SAYPremier Program’s** governing body is authorized to:
- A. Form teams and leagues,
 - B. Schedule **league** games,
 - C. **Schedule interplay with USSoccer sanctioned teams or other SAYPremier Programs,**

- D. **Organize and schedule soccer tournaments,**
- E. Decide protests, and
- F. Otherwise regulate activities pertaining to the **overall SAYPremier Program.**

RULE 10 – PLAYER PARTICIPATION

1. It is the intent of this rule to **encourage SAYPremier Soccer coaches to try and** assure that every player is allowed maximum participation.
2. **It is the goal of SAYPremier Soccer that every player should *** be allowed to play *** or *** given the opportunity to play ***** at least the equivalent of approximately one-half of every game, as closely as possible.

RULE 11 – SAYPREMIER VARIATIONS

1. Where the **SAYPremier Soccer** Organizational Rules mandate a particular procedure by use of the words “must”, “shall” or “will”, no variation shall be permitted without prior written consent of the SAY National Board of Directors.
2. Where the **SAYPremier Soccer** Organizational Rules are presented in the form of guidelines, recommendations or suggestions, such as when the word “may” is used, the **SAYPremier Program** may adopt the procedure suggested or modify it to suit its own needs or special circumstances – provided that the procedure chosen satisfies the intent and spirit of the RULE.
3. Procedures not specifically covered by the **SAYPremier Soccer** Organizational Rules are relegated to the governing body of the **SAYPremier Program for** decision.
4. If an **SAYPremier Program** wishes to experiment with a variation of a mandated Organizational or Playing rule, petition may be made to the SAY National Board of Directors for a variance, which is to last no longer than one year.
5. For a **SAYPremier Program** to continue to use an established variance, the **SAYPremier Program** will be required to file for re-approval each and every year.
6. During interplay between **SAYPremier Programs** using such approved aforementioned variances or modifications, and **SAYPremier Programs** that do not, only the standard **SAYPremier Soccer** Organizational Rules may be used.

RULE 12 – SAYPREMIER TOURNAMENTS

1. Any and all **SAYPremier Soccer tournaments involving (1) teams from two or more SAYPremier Programs and/or (2) non-SAYPremier Soccer teams**, require written notification to **National SAY** in order to be sanctioned as a **SAYPremier Soccer** approved activity. Such tournaments that do not receive sanctioning by **National SAY** are considered to be a non-SAY activity, and as such may not use the SAY logo and are not covered by **National SAY’s** applicable insurance.
2. Any **SAYPremier Program’s pre-season, in-season, and post-season tournament involving only teams from within the SAYPremier Program are considered to be “in-house”**. Similar to league play, these tournaments are considered to be part of the natural play permitted within a **SAYPremier Program’s jurisdiction and do not require sanctioning approval from National SAY**.
3. Sanctioning of a tournament is merely an endorsement by **National SAY** that insures all participants (i.e. players, coaches, referees, etc.) that:
 - A. The tournament is a legitimate **SAYPremier Soccer** activity, which is covered by **National SAY’s** applicable insurance.
 - B. The **SAYPremier Program** administering the tournament is a viable **SAYPremier Soccer** entity in good standing.
 - C. Games are to be played in accordance with standard **SAYPremier Soccer Organizational and Playing Rules**.
 - D. Any rule variances or special tournament features (e.g. tiebreakers) have been reviewed and are within acceptable **National SAY** guidelines.
 - E. Participating teams have been formed in compliance with the organizational rules of the governing national association.
 - F. Acceptance of participating teams is in accordance with **National SAY** and USSF policies.
4. Only a **SAYPremier Program** (not an individual, not a team, not a sponsor, not a **club**, etc.) may request that a tournament be sanctioned by **National SAY**. The **SAYPremier Program** must fill out and submit a **SAYPremier Tournament Sanctioning Form**, which in part will require stipulating any special rules to be used along with a copy of the tournament application or acceptance form to be given to the participating teams prior to their commitment to play in the tournament.
5. The **SAYPremier Program** requesting and receiving sanctioning for a tournament from **National SAY** shall be totally and solely responsible for the operation and administration of the tournament in accordance with **SAYPremier Soccer Organizational and Playing Rules** and the provisions set forth in the sanctioning process. All decisions and subsequent actions regarding tournament play and eligibility are the domain of the **SAYPremier Program**, i.e. not the sanctioning entity, **National SAY**.

6. Any previously approved rule variances or locally adopted variances used by a **SAYPremier Program** during the playing season are not automatically approved as acceptable for tournament play. Any variances from the rules, as written in the **SAYPremier Soccer** rules, must be formally requested in writing and submitted along with the Tournament Sanctioning Form. Acceptance or denial will be a part of the sanctioning document provided by **National SAY**.
7. **National SAY** will be responsible for reviewing and the sanctioning of all multi-**SAYPremier Program** tournaments. If a **SAYPremier Program** does not have a **signed** document from **National SAY** sanctioning the tournament, it is therefore considered to be a non-**SAYPremier Soccer** activity and a “play-at-your-own-risk”.

RULE 13 – SAYPREMIER SYSTEM OF OFFICIATING

1. **As in FIFA and USSoccer only the “Diagonal System” using three (3) officials is acceptable in SAYPremier Soccer.**
 - A. Only one official shall have the authority and responsibility for the calling of fouls and violations by the use of the whistle and shall perform as the “Referee” **in accordance with Law 5 in the FIFA Laws of the Game**
 - B. The other two officials shall perform as “Assistant Referees”, as described in **Law 6 in the FIFA Laws of the Game**.
 - C. The Referee shall accept the calls of an Assistant Referee with regard to incidents that do not come under the personal notice of the Referee. However, at all other times, the Referee is not obligated to, and may or may not accept the calls of an Assistant Referee, in accordance with the Referee’s own judgment, even if the effect is to nullify or grant a goal.

NOTE: Other SAY Soccer policies, guidelines and procedures can be found in the **SAYPremier Soccer Administrator’s Handbook**. Copies of this Handbook are available through the SAY National Office.