



NATIONAL HOMESCHOOL SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP RULES OF THE GAME

ELIGIBILITY:

- **TEAM ELIGIBILITY:** The NHSC is open to any high school varsity level Homeschool team throughout the USA. Multiple teams from the same Homeschool soccer club may be entered in either the Boys or Girls Championships if each team has been verified by NHSC Staff as competitive at the high school varsity level. NHSC Staff reserves the right to limit the number of registered teams from any Homeschool soccer club.
- **ROSTER COMPOSITION:** NHSC rosters must be comprised of players who are active members of their team or club for the 2016-2017 academic year. Teams competing in the NHSC outside of their State's normal soccer season may include players on their roster who are expected to participate on that team in the next upcoming regular season and who otherwise meet player eligibility rules. Players may participate on only one team roster during the NHSC. Rosters are limited to a maximum of 25 players.
- **PLAYER AGE:** Players shall be no younger than 12 years old and no older than 19 years old through the final day of NHSC competition.
- **PLAYER HOMESCHOOL DESIGNATION:** Players shall be homeschool students, with the majority of their education managed by their parents/guardians. *[EXPERIMENTAL RULE FOR 2016-2017: Each team is allowed two roster positions for players whose homeschool designation is unclear or who attend a school that does not offer the sport of soccer.]*
- **PLAYER GRADUATE STATUS:** Players who have formally graduated from high school are not eligible to participate in the NHSC.

INSURANCE/MEDICAL RELEASE:

- **TEAM INSURANCE:** Each team is required to have general liability insurance coverage for their team and players with limits of not less than \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence. Proof of insurance shall be available at the request of the NHSC.
- **MEDICAL RELEASE:** Each team must have in their possession (on site) during each day of NHSC competition a signed medical release form for each team member (Team Rep, Coach, Player, Student Manager, etc.) participating in the NHSC.

REFUNDS:

- **REGISTRATION FEES:** Teams that withdraw from the NHSC prior to the registration deadline will receive a refund of their registration fee (minus any applicable processing fees). Teams that withdraw from the NHSC after the registration deadline will receive a refund only if a replacement team is registered in their place.
- **CANCELLATION OF NHSC:** No refund is guaranteed if any or all of the NHSC is cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Any potential refund will be determined within 60 days of the NHSC once all invoices are paid and a final budget is approved by the NHSC Tournament Committee.

RULES OF THE GAME:

The NHSC employs National Federation High School (NFHS) rules, with the following modifications:

- **DURATION OF GAMES:** All games will employ 35-minute halves. Division I Gold Championship games will employ 40 minute halves.
- **TIE GAMES:** Pool play games ending in a tie will be scored as a tied game. Playoff games tied at the end of regulation time will be decided by the NFHS penalty kick procedure. Division I Gold Championship games that end in a tie will employ two 7 minute overtime periods, followed by the penalty kick procedure, if necessary.
- **DISQUALIFIED TEAM MEMBERS:** The NHSC has adopted the policy recommended by the NFHS whereby a team member disqualified under Rule 12.8.2-4 shall be barred from participating in the next contest.
- **PROTESTS:** The NHSC does not recognize protests.
- **CONCUSSION PROTOCOL:** The NHSC has adopted the following policy based in part on the NFHS "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports."
 1. No athlete should return to play in NHSC competition on the same day of a concussion.
 2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional that day. The athletic trainer on site should evaluate the player and determine if they have a concussion.
 3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any NHSC competition.
 4. Proof of medical clearance should be submitted to the NHSC prior to the athlete returning to competition.

TOURNAMENT FORMAT:

Boys and Girls Championships will include the following features:

- **COED TEAMS:** Coed teams will participate in the Boys Championship.
- **PRE-TOURNAMENT SEEDING:** Teams will be ranked and seeded into pools based on their season record and the strength of the game schedule from their most recent season, as determined by the NHSC Seeding Formula. Winners of State or Regional tournaments that meet the qualifications of the NHSC Tournament Committee may be considered for automatic bids to the Boys or Girls Division I Championships.
- **DIVISIONS:** Multiple divisions within either the Boys or Girls Championships may be employed based on the number of teams participating. Each division will be comprised of a maximum of twelve teams and a minimum of four teams.
- **GAMES:** Each team will be guaranteed 4 games, weather permitting, with a goal of no more than two games played per day.
- **PLAYOFF SEEDING:** Pool play results will be utilized to seed elimination playoff brackets. Championships comprised of only one pool will employ a round-robin system. Pool winners will be determined by points accumulated during pool play.
- **POOL or ROUND ROBIN SCORING SYSTEM:**
 - 3 points awarded for each win
 - 1 point awarded for each tie
 - 1 point awarded for each shutout (including 0-0)
 - 1 point awarded for each goal scored (up to 3 goals)
- **POOL PLAY TIE BREAKER SYSTEM:** In the event of a tie within a pool, the following criteria will be used (in the order listed) to determine the winner:
 1. Head to head competition
 2. Cumulative goal differential (maximum 3 goals per game)
 3. Fewest goals allowed
 4. Most goals scored (maximum 3 per game)
 5. Modified NFHS Tie Game Procedure (penalty kick procedure only)
[The penalty kick shootout will be scheduled 45 minutes prior to start time of the affected playoff game.]
- **CROSS POOL TIE BREAKER SYSTEM:** In the event of a tie where cross-pool ranking is required, criteria #2 - #5 above will be used to break the tie.
- **PLAYOFF GROUP SEEDING TIE BREAKER SYSTEM:** In the event of a tie to determine seeding positions within a playoff group, criteria #2 - #4 above will be used, with any further tie being determined by pre-tournament seeding.
- **SUB-DIVISIONAL PLAYOFF:** Championship divisions with multiple pools will be subdivided into 2-4 elimination playoff groups. First place pool teams will compete in a "Gold" playoff group, second place pool teams will compete in a "Silver" playoff group, third place pool teams will compete in a "Bronze" playoff group, etc.
- **PLAYOFF TIE GAME PROCEDURE:** [See RULES OF THE GAME - TIE GAMES above]
- **BALL HOLDERS:** Each team is required to provide one ball holder for each of their scheduled games.
- **TEAM AWARDS:** First place teams in each playoff group will be presented with awards for both the team and team members. Other team awards will be presented based on the number of entries in each division or playoff group. Team sportsmanship awards will be presented for each Championship division.
- **INDIVIDUAL AWARDS:** All-Star awards will be presented in each Championship division, with the All-Stars selected from a pool of nominees submitted by each team.

DELAYS/CANCELLATIONS:

- **LIGHTNING:** The NFHS lighting guideline will be used when lightning is witnessed by game or tournament officials within close proximity to tournament facilities. Participants will be asked to take shelter and the game will be suspended as per NFHS guidelines.
- **INCLEMENT WEATHER:** In the event of inclement weather, the NHSC Tournament Director or Tournament Committee will have the authority to:
 - Relocate or reschedule any game
 - Change the duration of any game
 - Cancel any preliminary game or reduce the number of scheduled games.
 - Determine an appropriate format for advancement of the playoff schedule.
- **SUSPENDED GAMES:** If a game is delayed or suspended prior to completion of the first half of play, every effort will be made to reschedule the game if it has a direct bearing on advancement within the tournament. Suspended games will restart with the same score and time remaining
- **CANCELLED GAMES:** Any game terminated after one half of play will be considered an official game and will retain its score at the time of cancellation.