

**U.S. SOCCER
DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
REGULATIONS
2009-10**



**U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION
1801 South Prairie Avenue
Chicago, IL 60616**

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I. ORGANIZATION

A. Overview: The U.S. Soccer Development Academy (“Development Academy”) is a national team training program and competition that will be conducted and administered by the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (“USSF”). The Development Academy consists of league and post season competition.

B. Development Academy Staff: The Development Academy Staff shall be appointed by the USSF CEO/Secretary General. The Academy Staff will be responsible for organization of the Development Academy, all administrative functions of the Development Academy, including amending these Regulations, the Disciplinary Code and any rules for the U.S. Soccer Development Academy, Appeals from the Discipline Committee and any other functions not expressly assigned to other bodies in these Regulations.

C. Technical Committee: The Technical Committee shall consist of the USSF National Team Coaches. The Technical Committee will be responsible for organizing all competition and training rules and procedures for the Development Academy.

D. Discipline Committee: The Discipline Committee shall be appointed by the USSF CEO/Secretary General subject to the requirements of the Development Academy Disciplinary Code. The Discipline Committee shall have the responsibilities set forth in the Disciplinary Code.

E. Definitions: The following definitions apply to these regulations:

“Academy Club” – means an organization that operates a U-15/16 and a U-17/18 team in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy and adopts the developmental principles outlined in the Development Academy Regulations.

“Academy Competition” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy League, U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs and U.S. Soccer Development Academy Finals Week.

“Academy League” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition featuring games between Academy Teams beginning in the fall and concluding before the Academy Playoffs in June.

“Academy Playoffs” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition held at the conclusion of the Academy League season among qualifying team from each division and several wildcards.

“Academy Finals Week” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition held at the conclusion of the Academy Playoffs that determines the Academy National Champion for each respective age group.

“Academy Game” – means any game played between two Academy Teams as part of an Academy Competition.

“Academy Game Officials” – means the Center Referee, assistant referee, fourth official and any other match officials appointed by the U.S. Soccer Development Academy overseeing an Academy League Game, Academy Playoff Game or Academy Finals Week Game.

“Academy Player” – means an individual registered with and playing soccer in the Development Academy Program.

“Academy Team” – means a group of Academy soccer players registered with the Development Academy and playing together for an Academy Club in a Conference of an Academy Competition in either the U-15/16 or U-17/18 age group.

“Academy Personnel ” – means an individual registered with the Development Academy and affiliated with an Academy Club to oversee the logistics of an Academy Team.

“Academy Coach” – means an individual who is registered with the Development Academy and selected by the Academy Staff to coach an Academy Team.

“Home Team” – means the Academy Team designated as host of an Academy Game.

“Visiting Team” – means the Academy Team designated as guest for an Academy Game.

F. Contact Information:

U.S. Soccer Development Academy
1801 South Prairie Avenue
Chicago, IL 60616
312-808-1300 (office)
312-808-1301 (fax)
academy@ussoccer.org

II. CLUB ELIGIBILITY

A. Overview: Any youth club in the United States may apply to participate in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy as an Academy Club.

B. Application: Applications are available at www.ussoccer.com. Applications must be returned to the Academy Staff by March 1st for new applications in all subsequent years. The Technical Committee will review applications as they are received and notification will be provided by April 1st in all subsequent years.

C. Criteria for Selection: Clubs will be chosen based on the following criteria: (1) national team coach analysis; (2) history of elite youth player development; (3) history of success in elite competitions; (4) geography; and (5) other criteria as determined by U.S. Soccer. The Technical Committee will make the final determination regarding which clubs are accepted into the Development Academy, subject to the club’s agreement to abide by all Development Academy requirements.

D. Withdrawal of a Club: In the event an Academy Team withdraws from the Academy League without finishing its scheduled games, the Academy Club shall forfeit its membership and performance bond, and the following regulations will take effect: (1) if at least half of the full schedule of games has been played, all resulting scores stand as validated by the Academy Staff, any unscheduled remaining games shall be recorded as a forfeit victory for the opponents; (2) if less than one-half of the full schedule of games has been played, these completed games will be deleted from the standings; (3) the Academy Staff

may, at its discretion, reschedule any or all remaining games.

E. Termination: the Academy Staff reserves the right to terminate the membership of an Academy Club should they fail to adhere to the terms of their Membership Agreement or act against the best interest of U.S. Soccer and/or the Development Academy. Academy Clubs may also have their membership terminated should they violate any of the Academy Regulations.

F. Evaluation: the Academy Staff will conduct an evaluation of all Academy Clubs pursuant to the guidelines attached as Appendix A to these regulations.

III. CLUB RESPONSIBILITIES (NON-FINANCIAL)

A. Compliance with Rules & Regulations: Academy Clubs are required to comply with these Regulations, the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Disciplinary Code and any other rules adopted for the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. The Academy Staff will regularly monitor compliance. In addition, Academy Clubs are encouraged to report situations / Academy Clubs to the Academy Staff, which appear to be in non-compliance with the Academy Requirements. Reporting non-compliance on the part of other Academy Clubs should not be viewed as a negative but rather as a positive attempt to maintain consistent league-wide standards that ensure professionalism and fairness, both on and off the field.

While all Clubs are required to adhere to the Academy Requirements, the Academy Staff reserves the right to decide how to enforce these requirements. Should an Academy Club be found in violation of any of the requirements outlined in this document, their standing as an Academy Club will be reviewed by the Academy Staff. The penalties will vary based on the type and frequency of the infraction, but the Academy Staff reserves the right to deny participation in Academy Competitions and refuse access to Academy coaching, referee and media resources.

B. Conduct: Each Academy Club shall be responsible for the conduct of the members of its club (officials and players), and of any person carrying out duties on its behalf throughout the competition and abide by the FIFA Code of Conduct.

C. Membership Agreement: Each Academy Club must provide a signed copy of their Membership Agreement for the following season by their Club President or Chairman of the Club Board of Directors by April 15.

D. Development

1. Training Days: Each Academy Team will be expected to hold at least three training sessions per week during the Academy League Season.

2. Rest Days: Each Academy Team is expected to provide at least one day of rest per week during the Academy League Season.

3. Team Participation in Unapproved Competitions: During the Academy League Season, teams are only permitted to participate in the non-Academy League games and elite tournaments held during the windows listed in section VII. J. below. Please note that elite events may only have one game per day. Academy Team participation in competitions such as local leagues, State Cup, Super Y-League and U.S. Club Soccer is not permitted unless specifically permitted under these regulations.

4. **Player Participation in Unapproved Competitions:** Academy Players must meet all attendance and participation requirements for training and games for their Academy Team during the Academy League Season. Failure to meet those requirements should result in release from the Academy Team. Academy Clubs may not permit any Academy Player to participate on a non-Academy team affiliated with the Club during the Academy League Season and Academy Clubs will be held accountable for the actions of their players. The only permissible soccer related reasons to miss Development Academy activities are National Team duty and the players' High School season. It is noted that High School participation is at the discretion of the individual player and the Academy Club. In lieu of high school, Academy Clubs may submit a request to substitute another form of competition. Such alternative competition must have a shorter season than high school. All requests are subject to Academy Staff approval.

5. **Academy Teams:** Academy Clubs are required to field Academy Teams in both of the Academy's age groups: U-15/16 and U-17/18. The U-15/16 team should include whomever the club believes are the best 14 and 15 year old players available; the U-17/18 team should include whomever the club believes are the best 15, 16 and 17 year old players available.

6. **Completion of Academy League Season:** All Academy Teams are required to participate in the entire Academy League Season. Should a team fail to complete their schedule, they will sacrifice their performance bond and their club will lose its standing as an Academy Club. The Academy Regular Season will require travel, including air travel, during the Academy Season.

7. **Training and Game Expectations:** Academy Clubs should make efforts to acquire the best facilities possible. All Academy Players, Academy Coaches, parents and Academy Club representatives are expected to display professionalism and class on and off the field. Clubs are responsible for adhering to all game day policies and procedures outlined and explained in the Academy Game Day Guide.

8. **Recruiting Players:** No Academy Club has exclusive territory rights. Academy Clubs must train and play home Academy League Games within reasonable geographic proximity to their club's home location unless mutually agreed upon by the visiting team. The Academy Clubs may recruit players for participation on Academy Teams from any geographic region and at any time during the year (subject to roster rules, regular attendance at team training and the schedule for adding players). Clubs should note that coaches and administrators may be subject to the rules of USSF Organization Members when they are recruiting for the club's non-Academy Teams. However, those rules should not apply to players recruited to play full-time on the Development Academy Teams.

E. **Release:** The Academy Clubs shall discharge USSF from all responsibility and relinquish any claim against USSF or its representatives for any damages resulting from any act or omission relating to the organization, administration or activity of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy.

IV. CLUB FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Performance Bond: Each Academy Club will be required to post a cash performance bond of \$2,500 at the beginning of each season to be used as a deposit for any infractions/fine/penalties incurred during the Academy League Season. Any remaining balance will be applied to future seasons or returned if so requested. All payments must be made out to USSF and be sent to U.S. Soccer Federation, Development Academy Department, 1801 South Prairie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

B. Travel Costs: All costs associated with the travel to competitions (other than the Academy Finals Week) are the responsibility of the individual Academy Clubs. Should U.S. Soccer obtain favorable rates with hotels, airlines or car rental suppliers, the Academy Staff will try to make these rates available to the Academy Clubs.

C. Training/Coaching Costs: All costs associated with the training and coaching of an Academy Team are the responsibility of the individual Academy Clubs.

D. Administrative Costs: All costs associated with running an Academy Team are the responsibility of the individual Academy Clubs.

E. Registrations Costs: All Academy Players and Academy Coaches must register with U.S. Soccer to participate in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy program. Registration fees are \$5 per player and \$25 per coach. Fees are subject to change.

F. Fines/Penalties: The Academy Staff reserves the right to assess fines for violations of the Academy Membership Agreement, Competition Rules, Development Academy Regulations, Development Academy Disciplinary Code or Development Academy Marketing Guidelines. All of the money collected in fines will go to the Academy Program.

G. Equipment Costs: Unless provided by the Academy Staff, all costs associated with equipment are the responsibility of the individual Academy Clubs.

H. Facility Costs: All costs associated with securing a Facility are the responsibility of the individual Academy Clubs.

I. Referees: USSF will be responsible for referee fees and compensating referees after each Academy League, Showcases, Playoffs or Finals Week game.

J. Other: Unless otherwise indicated in these regulations, all expenses related to an Academy Team shall be borne by the participating Academy Club.

V. DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Academy Finals Week: The Development Academy will provide airfare, hotel, meals and ground transportation for up to 23 (20 players and 3 coaches/administrators) people from each of the Academy Teams that qualify for the annual Academy Finals Week.

B. Best Practices Coaching and Administrative Seminars: USSF will provide room and board for one (1) Academy Coach and one (1) Administrator from each Academy Club to attend each Best Practices Coaching Seminar. The Academy Club must send at least one (1) coach and one (1) administrator to each Best Practices Coaching Seminar. The Academy Club may pay a registration fee

and all costs for up to two (2) additional coaches or administrators to attend the Best Practices Coaching Seminar.

C. Academy Administration: The Academy Staff will provide administration for the Development Academy.

D. Academy Website: The Academy Staff will provide the website for the Development Academy Program.

E. General Liability Insurance: USSF will provide general liability insurance for each Academy Club. This general liability insurance shall only cover activities related to the U.S. Soccer Development Academy.

F. Player Medical Insurance: USSF will provide secondary medical insurance for each Academy Player. This medical insurance shall only cover activities related to the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. Consult the Insurance Filing Procedure for details on the policy and how to file a claim.

VI. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION

A. Eligible Players

1. U-17/18: Each Academy Club shall ensure the following when selecting its representative Academy Team for the U-17/18 Age Group in an Academy Competition: a) all players shall be subject to the Academy's jurisdiction; b) all players shall be eligible for participation in accordance with the relevant the Academy and FIFA regulations; c) all players shall turn 18 years of age on or after January 1 in the year of the relevant Academy League season.

2. U-15/16: Each Academy Club shall ensure the following when selecting its Academy Team for the U-15/16 Age Group in an Academy Competition: a) all players shall be subject to USSF's jurisdiction; b) all players shall be eligible for participation in accordance with the relevant the Academy and FIFA regulations; c) all players shall turn 16 years of age on or after January 1 in the year of the relevant Academy League season.

B. Academy Roster

1. General: The Academy Staff shall set a date before the beginning of the season by which each Club must provide an initial Academy Club roster. Each roster shall be published on the official U.S. Soccer Development Academy registration website, and shall be considered the official roster of the Academy Club. There is a minimum of 36 players per Academy Club, and no limit to the number of players on the roster.

2. Roster Size and Match Reports: Only 18 players from the master roster will be eligible to participate in each game and these players must be placed on the official match report of the game (showing players that will start, are substitutes and are suspended). The official match report shall be presented to the referee prior to the game and should also include team officials. Academy Teams are responsible for verifying the accuracy of match reports. The Academy Staff will update the Academy Master rosters weekly on the Academy registration website to reflect any suspensions, additions or drops, or other eligibility issues. Academy Teams using players before they have been properly cleared to compete

by the Academy Staff will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions. There is no limit to the number of players on the roster that do not have United States citizenship. For a player who comes to the United States on or after the player is 12 years of age, the player must request and receive an international clearance from U.S. Soccer. However, an international clearance is not required of a player who is 12, 13, 14, 15, or 16 years of age if the player and the player's parent or guardian signs a statement that the player has not signed a professional contract or received money from any team for playing soccer. (See Appendix A for more details.)

3. Eligible Player: Players listed on the Master Roster who meet the age requirement for their Academy Team, have paid the registration fee and have supplied proof of their age to the Academy Staff in the form of a Birth Certificate or Passport, Waiver & Indemnification Form and are properly registered and are not subject to suspension. Players can only be approved and made eligible by Academy Staff.

4. Ineligible Player: Players not listed on the Master Roster or any player listed on the Master Roster but not eligible to play, due to reasons such as missing Academy registration forms, proof of age, awaiting international clearance, serving a league suspension or not on the official game day roster and line-up sheet shall be considered an ineligible player. Any Academy Club using an illegal player during an Academy competition shall be subject to a fine as determined by the Academy Staff, a deduction of three points in the competition standings, as well as a forfeit (by a 0-3 margin) of any Academy Games in which the illegal player participated

5. Academy Player and Coach Passes: All Academy Players and Academy Coaches must present their U.S. Soccer Development Academy pass to the Referee prior to the game. Academy Teams will be notified by the Academy Staff of any missing documents. Until these documents are received, the player cannot play in an Academy Competition. Additionally, a player or coach is not considered registered until the team receives a U.S. Soccer Development Academy Pass from the Academy Staff. Other organization passes may not be used as a form of identification. The only accepted identification for an Academy Game is the Academy Pass. Academy Staff will be responsible for setting up the procedures for issuing the Academy Passes and notifying Academy Clubs regarding this procedure. Academy Staff may issue temporary player cards, which are also acceptable forms of identification for Academy Games. Any eligible player or coach participating in an Academy Game without a valid Academy pass is subject to a \$25 fine.

6. Roster:

a. Initial Roster: Academy Staff shall set a date for setting the official Academy Team Rosters prior to each team's first game. A club must submit a Master Rosters for its U-15/16 and U-17/18 teams., including a minimum of 36 players per team, not including developmental players. There is no maximum number of players required for an Academy Master Roster provided an Academy Team does not violate the Minimum Start Requirement.

b. Full Time Player Adds: At any time during the season prior to April 1st, Academy Teams may add a full time player to its official Master Roster.

c. Limitations on Adds: Academy Teams shall be permitted a maximum of twelve (12) adds of players per club per season to either age group of their Academy Rosters.

d. Player Transfers: Transfer of a player from one Academy Team to another shall be treated like any other add. A player who wishes to transfer to a new Academy Team must obtain a release from his original Academy Club before transferring. If the original Academy Club does not agree to release the player (and the player will not meet the 25% star requirement), the transfer will be allowed and the player must sit at least 3 games, plus any head-to-head matches that season. In all other circumstances, the Academy Club has the discretion to release or not release the player subject to During the Academy Season, players may not train or otherwise participate with a Development Academy team that they are not rostered with prior to approval of a transfer request. If a player trains with another Academy Team prior to receiving a release, he will not be permitted to transfer to that Academy club. Releases must be sent to Academy Staff via an email to academy@ussoccer.org. Academy Staff shall review and have the authority to approve or deny a transfer of a player in all circumstances.

f. Developmental Players: Each Academy Club may submit a list of Developmental Players for each Academy Team to participate in Academy games. A Developmental Player must be a currently registered player on an Academy Club's non-Academy Team and must have been registered with that Academy Club between August 1 and December 31 of current Academy Seasonal year. Developmental Players registered after February 1, 2009 with an Academy team will require proof of membership with the Academy Club at some point between August 1, 2009 and January 31, 2010. Developmental Players may not be registered with any two different clubs at the same time during the Academy Seasonal year. The Developmental Player will not be subject to the Minimum Start Requirement. A player can only be designated a Developmental Player before June 1st. A Developmental Player must be requested ten (10) days before the first game in which they will appear. A Developmental Player may appear in a maximum of six (6) Academy games per season. Developmental Players cannot participate in the Academy Playoffs or Finals Week and are not eligible for year end awards. Developmental Players can only change their status to full-time once during the Academy season. A status change must be made by Wednesday at 12 p.m. Central Time before a weekend match.

g. College Players: College players are eligible to participate as Developmental Players. A college player is defined as any player on a college roster, including Spring Season. Please note that each player should confirm with his college that participation will not affect his NCAA eligibility.

h. Younger Players Playing Up on the Older Roster: Players on the U-15/16 Academy Team may be selected for the U-17/18 Game Day Roster and they are not subject to the 25% start requirement for the U-17/18 Team's Academy Games. Players playing up are not permitted to play in both the U-15/16 Academy Game if the U-15/16 Academy Game and the U-17/18 Academy Game if the game occurs on the same day.

i. Late Registration: Any registrations received after Wednesday at 12 p.m. Central Time for a match the following weekend will incur a \$50 late fee, plus the cost of shipping and handling to deliver the pass(es).

7. Minimum Start Requirement: All Academy Players, including goalies, are required to start in at least 25% of their team's Academy games during the season. The Academy Staff will review the percentage of player starts for each team throughout the Academy League Season. A team's failure to comply with this requirement may result in a fine from the Academy Office and the potential expulsion of a club from the Academy Program. Developmental players are not included in the Minimum Start requirement. The official record of player starts will be the game and player

statistics available on-line. If a player is dropped by the club, the club must submit a signed written explanation if that player failed to start 25% of the Academy matches for the season. The Academy Staff reserve the right to refuse to accept the drop if they believe that the drop was to avoid the 25% rule. If a player is added, the player must start at least 25% of the team's remaining Academy Games during the season. The Academy Staff will have the authority, upon request by the Club, to allow exceptions to this rule in special circumstances (for example, a serious injury suffered by a player). The Academy Club is responsible for keeping track of starts by Academy Players and must notify the Academy Staff about potential exceptions as soon as possible.

8. Medical Notes: Players that will not meet the 25% start requirement or have a long standing injury that prohibits him from participating regularly with his Academy team may submit a Medical Note from a doctor or nurse to verify the following: date of injury, length of injury and date of return to Academy participation. Once a medical note is received, the stats will be adjusted online to reflect the injury.

C. Registration: All Registrations are completed online at <http://academy.demosphere.com>. In addition to the online registration, the Academy Club must submit copies of at least one of the following documents as a proof of age for each player.

- Passport
- Birth Certificate

Furthermore, the Academy Club must submit a signed waiver for each Academy Player, proof of registration with the Academy Club if the player is a developmental player and the registration fee of five (5) dollars. Foreign players must complete the clearance process outlined above in VI. B. 2. Academy Staff shall have the authority to establish additional procedures, including deadlines, for registration of players.

Coaches and Club Administrators must complete the online registration process at <http://academy.demosphere.com>, pay a twenty-five dollar (\$25) registration fee and complete a background check once every two (2) years.

VII. COMPETITION

A. Overview: The Academy Staff will place Academy Teams in geographically-based conferences and set a schedule. The Academy Staff reserves the right to adjust game scheduling.

B. Schedule: The Academy Staff will provide a preliminary schedule for the Academy League by July 1st. The season will be held from September until mid-July each year. Each Academy Team's season will accommodate the local high school season and limitations due to climate where appropriate. The U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs and Finals Week will be held each year in June and July. If an Academy Team would like to change a fixture date, they must contact Academy Staff at least 28 days prior to the game. Changes are subject to the approval of the Academy Staff and the other Academy Team involved.

C. Venue/Kick-off Times: The Academy Staff shall fix the dates of all Academy Competition Games. The venues and specific kick-off times of the Academy Games shall be proposed by the Home Team, subject to the approval of the Academy Staff. The Home Team shall submit Venues and specific kick-off times to the Academy Staff for all Academy games by August 15th, so Visiting Teams can make the appropriate arrangements or offer objections for the Academy Staff's

consideration. The games may be played in daylight or under floodlights. Evening games may only be played at venues with appropriate lighting installations. The Visiting and Home Teams will be entitled to warm up on the field before the game, weather permitting. If the Visiting Team arrives the day prior to a game, they are entitled to one training session on the game field if it is available. Training on game fields may not be available at Showcases, Playoffs or Finals Week.

D. Facility Set-Up: The Home Team shall be responsible for setting up its venue to include the appropriate lines, goals, nets, corner flags, benches, water for both teams and Gatorade sideline set up for both teams.

E. Postponement: Whenever a game is postponed or canceled, the home team must provide to the Academy Staff a written notice of why the game was not played, including, if necessary, a statement from the owner of the stadium / playing facility within 24 hours.

F. Rescheduling a Postponed Game: The two teams must consult regarding rescheduling of any postponed game and attempt to reschedule within seven (7) days of the original game date, subject to the ability of the Academy to assign referees for the rescheduled game. If a game is not rescheduled within seven (7) days, the game may be rescheduled by the Academy Staff. Any games not played during the season will result in no points being awarded to both teams and the game will be recorded as a non-played game.

G. Rescheduling Considerations: The Academy Staff shall have the authority to review all the facts, (including fault on the part of either team, unavoidable conditions, expense for both teams and requests by a team to take a particular action in the best interests of the Academy Program, its clubs and its teams) in determining whether and when a game should be rescheduled, who should bear the financial burden as a result of cancellation or rescheduling, whether the game should be forfeited or cancelled permanently and whether other fines should be levied. The integrity of the Academy Program and the Home Team's schedule shall be given considerable weight in the resolution of these matters. Unless the sanction or remedy is set forth specifically in any U.S. Soccer Development Academy rules or regulations, the Academy Staff shall decide what action to take, and the Academy Staff's decision shall be final.

H. Facility Clearances: Once an Academy Team has approved its individual schedule and the Academy Competition Schedules are released, the Academy Staff assumes that a team's home facility is cleared for all dates on its schedule. If not available, an alternative location must be provided. The Academy Staff will not automatically accept a postponement or cancellation of a game after schedules have been approved because a field is no longer available.

I. Standings: The Academy Staff assumes the responsibility of posting the Official Academy League standings at ussoccer.com. Official Academy League standings include wins, losses, ties, goals scored for, goals scored against and total league points. All standings are generated by the Match Report submitted by the Referee within 24 hours of the completion of the game.

Points:

Three points for a win

One point for a tie

Zero points for a loss

Forfeit = 0-3 loss

Teams have 24 hours to verify their game results with the Academy Staff.

Division Tiebreakers:

The ranking of each team in the Division will be determined as follows:

- a) greatest number of points obtained in all Division games;
- b) greatest goal difference in all Division games;
- c) greatest number of goals scored in all Division games.

If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings will be determined as follows:

- d) greatest number of points obtained in the Division games between the teams concerned;
- e) greatest goal difference resulting from the Division games between the teams concerned;
- f) greater number of goals scored in the Division games between the teams concerned;
- g) drawing of lots by the Academy Staff.

Wildcard Tiebreakers:

The ranking of each team in the Wildcard will be determined as follows:

- a) greatest points per game obtained in all Academy games;
- b) greatest goal difference per game in all Academy games;
- c) greatest number of goals scored per game in all Academy games.

If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings will be determined as follows:

- d) greatest number of points obtained in the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
- e) goal difference resulting from the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
- f) greater number of goals scored in the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
- g) drawing of lots by the Academy Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

Playoffs Tiebreakers:

The ranking of each team in the Playoffs will be determined as follows:

- a) greatest number of points obtained in all Playoff games;
- b) greatest goal difference in all Playoff games;
- c) greatest number of goals scored in all Playoff games.

If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings will be determined as follows:

- d) greatest number of points obtained in the Playoff games between

- the teams concerned;
- e) greatest goal difference resulting from the Playoff games between the teams concerned;
- f) greater number of goals scored in the Playoff games between the teams concerned;
- g) penalty kicks if only two teams are still equal;
- h) drawing of lots by the Academy Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

Finals Week Tiebreakers:

The ranking of each team in Finals Week will be determined as follows:

- a) greatest number of points obtained in all Finals Week games;
- b) greatest goal difference in all Finals Week games;
- c) greatest number of goals scored in all Finals Week games.

If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings will be determined as follows:

- d) greatest number of points obtained in the Finals Week games between the teams concerned;
- e) greatest goal difference resulting from the Finals Week games between the teams concerned;
- f) greater number of goals scored in the Finals Week games between the teams concerned;
- g) penalty kicks if only two teams are still equal;
- h) drawing of lots by the Academy Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

J. Permissible Outside Competition Windows: Academy Teams shall be permitted to participate in elite tournaments and international travel during specific windows set by Academy Staff, corresponding to the time periods listed below. Academy Teams will only be permitted to participate in tournaments that play one (1) game or less per day. Each year, Academy Staff will identify specific dates for the following three windows:

- Winter Window (for periods in late December or early January)
- Spring Window (for periods near Easter week)
- Summer Window (for periods after the end of Development Academy season)

Academy Clubs can request special exceptions to participate outside of these windows if opportunities to participate against international opponents arise. All exceptions are subject to approval by Academy Staff.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY TOURNAMENT COMPETITION

A. Academy Playoffs: The top two (2) teams in each division will qualify for the Academy Playoffs. The top two (2) teams in the division will be determined based upon each teams' point total for games within the division and tiebreakers if necessary. The next twelve (12) teams with the best overall points per game (regardless of standing in their division) and tiebreakers criteria if necessary will also qualify for the Playoffs.

B. The Academy Team's can roster no more than 20 fulltime player for the Academy Playoffs. The Academy Team will be responsible for all of its expenses related to the Academy Playoffs.

C. Seeding for Academy Playoffs: Seeding for the Academy Playoffs will be based on total points per game for all Academy Games.

D. Academy Playoffs Format: Each team will participate in a round robin group format, playing each other team in the group. The group standings will be determined based on the total points and tiebreakers if necessary. The winners of each group will advance to the Academy Finals Week.

E. Academy Finals Week: The eight Academy Teams from each age group that qualify from the Academy Playoffs will meet in mid-July to compete in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Finals Week.

F. Academy Finals Week Roster: The Academy Team's roster for the Academy Finals will be 20 players. The Academy Staff will arrange travel for 20 players and three coaches/administrators to attend the Academy Finals Week. The Academy Staff will arrange airfare, hotels, meals and ground transportation for the 23 person travel party. The Academy Team will be responsible for all other expenses.

G. Academy Finals Week Seeding: Seeding of the Academy Finals Week will be based on the results of the Academy Playoffs.

H. Academy Finals Week Format: Each team will participate in a round robin group format, playing each other team in the group once with a placement game for final standings. The group standings will be determined based on the total points and tiebreakers if necessary. After group play, teams will play in a placement game against the team with the same placement in the other group.

IX. LAWS OF THE GAME, DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, DISPUTES, PROTESTS & APPEALS

A. Laws of the Game

1. General: Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, all Academy Games shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game in force at the time of the competition and as laid down by the International Football Association Board. In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, the English version shall be authoritative.

2. Game Length: All U-15/16 games will be two 40 minute halves with 10 minute half time. All U-17/18 Academy Games will be two 45 minute halves with 15 minute half time.

3. Substitutions: All Academy Games will have a maximum of seven (7) substitutions per game with no re-entry. Substitutions are allowed at any stoppage.

B. Disciplinary Matters: Disciplinary incidents are dealt with in compliance with the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Disciplinary Code. The players and clubs participating in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy agree to comply with the Laws of the Game, the USSF Bylaws and Policies, these Regulations and the Disciplinary Code. The Academy Players, Academy Coaches and Academy Clubs agree to comply with all further directives regarding the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. The

Academy Players agree notably to: a) respect the spirit of fair play and non-violence; b) behave accordingly; c) refrain from illegal use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

C. Disputes: Parties shall try to resolve all disputes in connection with the Development Academy by negotiation. In compliance with USSF Bylaw 707, member clubs, players and other officials may not take disputes to an ordinary court of law. If a decision is subject to appeal, it shall be submitted to the jurisdiction of the Academy Staff.

D. Protest & Appeals

1. Overview: For the purpose of these regulations, protests are objections of any kind related to events or matters that have a direct effect on games, including but not limited to the eligibility of players, the state of the field, accessory game equipment, crowd behavior and stadium installations.

2. Time: Unless otherwise stipulated in this article, protests shall be submitted in writing to the Referee or faxed to the Academy Staff within 12 hours of the conclusion of the game in question and followed up immediately with a full written report, including a copy of the original protest, to be sent in writing to the Academy Staff; otherwise they will be disregarded.

3. Eligibility: Protests regarding the eligibility of players nominated for games shall be submitted in writing to the Academy Staff no later than 24 hours after the game.

4. Field Conditions: Protests regarding the state of the field, its surroundings, markings or accessory items (e.g. goals, flag posts or soccer balls) shall be made in writing to the Referee before the start of the game by the Academy Coach or Academy Team Manager lodging the protest. If the field's playing surface becomes unplayable during a game, the Referee shall have the sole right to determine whether to delay or postpone the game.

5. During a Game: Protests against any incidents that occur during the course of a game shall be made to the Referee by the Academy Coach or Academy Team Manager immediately after the disputed incident and before play has resumed.

6. Referee's Decisions: No protests may be made about the Referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play, such decisions being final.

7. Frivolous Protests: If an unfounded or irresponsible protest is lodged, the Academy Staff may dismiss the protest.

X. RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Overview: the Academy Staff is committed to providing a safe environment for its Members and participants, and to preventing abusive conduct in any form. Every member Club and its personnel are responsible for protecting participants and ensuring their safety and well being while involved in sponsored activities. To this end, the following guidelines of behavior and procedures have been adopted for member Clubs, staff, volunteers and participants. All Clubs, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees, are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines. Violation of these guidelines may be used as a basis for a club or its staff's suspension or other disciplinary action, or a staff's disqualification from registration.

1. Abuse of any kind is not permitted within the Development Academy. Physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from Academy players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators shall not be tolerated.

2. Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to: striking, hitting, kicking, biting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure and any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within the Development Academy.

3. Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but are not limited to such forms of abuse as: insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.

4. The Development Academy is committed to providing a safe environment for players, participants and staff. Every Member is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward our Members by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling or spectator.

5. The Academy Staff will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly.

6. Each staff member who is required to be registered shall also submit to a background check every two years. Failure to submit a background check application before participating with Development Academy registered players, or falsifying the application in any way, shall be grounds for immediate suspension from the Development Academy. The staff's member club may also be terminated if they are aware of a staff falsifying an application.

B. Conduct: The Academy Staff promotes good sportsmanship throughout the Development Academy and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials and volunteers.

1. To protect youth participants, as well as coaches, officials and volunteers, it is strongly recommended that no adult person allow him/herself to be alone with an individual child (unless their own child) or with any group of children during sponsored activities. In particular, it is recommended that coaches or other adult members of the Academy Club:

- Do not drive alone with an individual child participant in the car.

- Do not take an individual child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room.
- Private conversations with youth participants should occur within the view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of a private office or hotel room.
- Coaches and other adult members of the Academy Club should not socialize individually with participants outside of sponsored activities [in the absence of participant's parents].

2. Supervision/Chaperone ratio: It is recommended that for any sponsored activity, the ratio of adults to youth participants be at least 1:9, or 1 adult for every 9 children, with a minimum of 2 adults for every activity.

3. When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age group, and with chaperones in separate, but nearby rooms.

4. No child should be left alone at a training session or at any other time until they are picked up by their parent, older sibling or other designated adult. It is recommended that the last adult in addition to the coach or trainer wait at the site until the child is picked up.

5. We want to empower our children to trust their feelings and let them know that their concerns, fears and hopes are important by listening to them. Open communication between children and parents, or between children and other adults in the organization may help early warning signs of abuse to surface.

C. Background Checks: All coaches and administrators who are required to register with the Development Academy must complete a risk management application every two years, which can be accessed online. Failure to complete or falsification of the application can result in immediate disqualification or suspension. The Development Academy will cover the cost of these background checks for any administrator/coach registered with the Academy Team.

D. Disqualification of Individuals

1. The Academy Staff may deny registration to and disqualify any individual, or deny membership to or otherwise discipline any Academy Club which continues to employ or utilize any individual who either fails to comply with the these registration procedures, falsifies information or as a result of such procedures is determined by the Academy Staff to be unfit to continue in his current position, and is disqualified.

2. The Academy Staff may use any information in its absolute discretion in determining disqualifications. Such information may include conviction of any felony, gross misdemeanors, violation of these guidelines or driving offenses, including: loss of license, reckless driving, impaired driving or a DUI.

3. Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by the Academy Staff until the matter is resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the

organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated within the Development Academy. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his/her former position

4. The Development Academy and its members shall further comply with the U.S. Soccer Risk Management Bylaws, Rules, and Policies, including Bylaw 212, and Policies 212 and 601-10.

E. Goal Safety: Home Clubs are responsible for inspecting the goals and ensuring the safety of the goals. However, should the visiting Club become aware of a goal safety issue, they should immediately inform the home Club and the game official about the issue. The home Clubs should do the following:

1. Pre-Game Suggestions: (a) Make sure that the goal is firmly secured to the ground with anchors; (b) Make sure that all connecting hardware (nuts, bolts, etc.) is properly attached; (c) Make sure that the structural integrity of the goal has not been compromised (cracks in welds or posts, etc.); (d) Make sure that the goal is on a level (flat) surface; and (e) check the net attachment system to make sure that it is secure and that there are no sharp edges.

2. Post-Game Suggestions: (a) if goals remain in the up-right position, make sure they are secured with ground anchors; (b) if anchored with portable style anchors, goals should be stored by being chained together face-to-face, or placed in a face down position; (c) remove the net when the goal is not in use; (d) make sure that all connecting hardware (nuts, bolts, etc.) are in place and secure; (e) check the structural integrity of the goal; (f) never allow anyone to climb on the goals; (g) if goals are moved, exercise extreme caution and allow adequate manpower to move the goals; and (h) make sure that warning labels are visible and in good condition.

3. Post-Season Suggestions: If the club owns the goals, when the soccer season is complete, consider fully disassembling goals and storing them in the proper facilities.

F. Field Inspection: Home Clubs are responsible for inspecting the field and ensuring the safety of the facility. However, should the visiting Club become aware of a safety issue at the facility, they should immediately inform the home Club and the game official about the issue. The home Club should do the following.

1. Inspect for foreign objects
2. Check for holes, hills or ruts
3. Inspect sprinkler heads to make sure that they are seated and properly covered
4. Ensure there is a restraining line for spectators at least five (5) feet beyond the touch line
5. Inspect bleachers and seating areas
6. Inspect the field and surrounding areas for any possible “attractive nuisances”

G. Referee Responsibility for Safety: All determinations as to the safety of the field, the goals, the balls, player equipment are ultimately the responsibility of the referee assigned to the game. Any field,

equipment or ball conditions deemed by the referee to be unsafe must be corrected by the home Club before play can begin or resume.

H. Club Liability: To the extent that Academy Clubs are not covered by the general liability insurance provided by USSF, Academy Clubs assume all risks, responsibilities and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death while using property and facilities during games in Academy Competitions, whether such loss, damage, injury or death be occasioned by the team or by the league, its officers, agents or otherwise.

I. Player Liability: Players shall assume all risks, responsibilities and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death to himself while engaged as a player for a club or as a player on a representative team of the league subject to applicable state laws and regulations.

J. Liability Waiver & Indemnification Form: All coaches, administrators and players and their parent or guardian are required to sign a liability waiver when they submit their registration.

XI. EQUIPMENT

A. Uniforms: Academy Players, Academy Coaches and Academy Club Officials are not allowed to display political, religious or personal messages in any language or form on their playing or team uniforms, equipment (including bags, beverage containers, medical bags, etc.) or body for the duration of official Academy Games. Academy Teams are required to have one white (or similarly light colored) uniform and one dark uniform. Home teams will choose their uniforms and visiting teams will be required to wear their contrasting uniforms. Academy Teams are required to apply the Academy Patch on the right sleeve of their game jerseys only. Patches will be supplied to the Academy Team at no cost for two (2) full sets of Academy uniforms. Additional patches for jerseys may be purchased.

B. Soccer Balls: All Academy Games are to be played with the Academy Game Ball. The Academy will provide a set number of Academy Game Balls at no cost to the Academy Clubs. No game can be played without Academy Game Balls. Should an Academy Club require additional game balls, they will be available in limited quantities for purchase from the Academy. There shall be a minimum of three (3) Academy Game Balls at each game, and the ball shall be approved by the referee.

C. Goals, Nets, Corner Flags and Benches: Kwik Goal products are recommended. All goals must be properly anchored.

XII. PLAYER INSURANCE

A. Medical Insurance: Each Academy Player will be provided secondary medical insurance by USSF. All players are covered who:

1. Have been registered by their Academy Club pursuant to the registration rules; and
2. Have had a pass issued by the Development Academy

B. How to File a Claim: To file a medical insurance claim, contact the Development Academy Staff.

XIII. COMMERCIAL RIGHTS

All commercial rights can be found in the Development Academy Marketing Guidelines.

XIV. REFEREEING & GAME INFORMATION

A. Overview: The Referees and Assistant Referees will be assigned for each game by the USSF Referee Department.

B. Fees: The fees for Referees and Assistant Referees shall be a total of \$175 per game. USSF will pay the Referees and Assistant Referees.

C. Match Report: After each game, each club must verify and sign the official Match Report. The Referee shall enter the match data using the online reporting system within 24 hours of the game. The Academy Team Manager and/or Academy Coach will be responsible for reviewing the Online Match Report and submitting any corrections to the Academy Staff. The Online Match Report will be used to generate standings, track suspensions and gather statistics.

D. Game Information: On the Match Report, the Referee shall note all occurrences of significance, such as misconduct of players leading to caution or expulsion, unsporting behavior by supporters and/or by officials or any other person acting on behalf of a club at the game and any other incident happening before, during and after the game in as much detail as possible.

XV. COMPLIANCE WITH DECISIONS TAKEN BY DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY BODIES

All players and officers of the participating clubs shall undertake to comply fully with the regulations and decisions taken by the Academy Staff, Technical Committee and the Discipline Committee.

XVI. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Academy Staff shall issue any instructions necessitated by special circumstances that may arise. These instructions shall form an integral part of these regulations.

XVII. MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR

Matters not provided for in these regulations and cases of force majeure shall be decided by the USSF CEO/Secretary General. All decisions shall be final.