

2026 CAROLINAS CUP 8 V 8 RULES

General

All matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game as issued by FIFA, with the following exceptions.

Player and Team Eligibility

Teams and players must be registered with USASA and in good standing with their State Association.

8 v 8

Rosters limit of 18 players.

Female players are allowed in any of the Men's Divisions.

COED – a minimum of three (3) female players on the field at any position at all times.

Defensive wall must be 8 yards from the ball. Attacking player must be at least 1 yard away from the wall.

No Offside or 3-Line Rule

Duration of Play

Two equal halves of 30 minutes will be played. There will be a 5-minute half time interval.

Matches will be shortened at the discretion of the referee in the event of inclement weather.

Fields

All matches will be played on minimum 65yd x 40yd fields

Uniforms

All players must wear completely covered, legal shin guards and have cleats that meet FIFA standards.

Jewelry is not permitted to be worn on the field of play during match play. All team jerseys must be clearly numbered and matching. The goalkeeper's jersey must be of a different color than either team's jerseys. The HOME team, as listed on the tournament schedule, MUST change to alternative jerseys if there is a color conflict in the opinion of the officials.

Captains Meeting & Team Check-In

Team contact/captain must be present at the captain's meeting for team check-in at the tournament headquarters. Upon arrival, you will provide a mobile phone number where you can be reached throughout the dates of the event. If your team captain or team representative is not going to be at team check-in, you must notify Carolinas Cup Competition Committee to arrange a pre-tournament check-in or your team will be dropped from the schedule. At team check-in for out of state teams, you MUST have a copy of your final roster as approved by your Association.

Field Check-In

Teams must be on time, at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start. 10 minutes past the scheduled start time will constitute a forfeit. The clock will START on time. Five players will constitute a team and the clock will start accordingly. Captains need to be ready when the referee calls for captains to present

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the team's certified roster with the correct corresponding jersey numbers to the center referee and meet the opposing captain.

In an orderly fashion, have individual players line up so the referee can check players from the roster, jersey number, and equipment check. Coaches, players, and spectators must remain between the penalty areas and 3 to 5 yards from the touchline. No one shall be behind the goal lines and goals. Team's benches will occupy one side of the field. ALL spectators must be on the opposite side of the field. Coaching is restricted to their bench's half of the field.

Divisions Groupings

Shall be determined by the tournament committee based on the number of entries received, previous Cup results, the geographical distribution of teams, the timeliness of applications received, and league results, as the priorities.

Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions in each game. Same player may return to the field if they have been substituted.

A team may substitute a player at the following times:

- During a goal kick or at re-start after a goal by either team;
- At half time;
- During a throw-in (only the team in possession of the ball may make a substitution during a throw-in);
- In the event of an injury.

Match Play Format

Each Team will play the other teams in their designated group as scheduled.

Points for bracket standings are as follows:

3 points for the win

1 point for a tie

0 points for the loss.

1 point for shutout

Tie Breakers

Tiebreakers will be applied in the following sequence 1, 2, 3 and 4 for ranking.

1. Head to Head

If two teams are tied for the same ranking, the tiebreaker will be the result of the game previously played between these two; the winner will be ranked prior to the other.

2. Greatest Goal Differential

If two teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be the team with greatest goal differential.

3. Least Goals Allowed

If two teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be least goals allowed.

4. Kicks from The Mark

Finally, if two or more teams are still tied, the tiebreaker will be kicks from the mark.

A coin flip or draw of lots may be used in certain circumstances such as Inclement weather.

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Three-Way Tiebreakers

No Head to Head

1. Greatest Goal Differential
2. Least Goals Allowed
3. Kicks from the Mark

Once the Three-way tie is reduced to two teams, the tie breaker returns to the beginning of the Three-Way Tiebreaker sequence

If there needs to be a Three-Way “Kicks from the Mark”

All three teams’ names will go into a hat

First team drawn will receive the “by” and be considered the home team

The next team drawn will kick in the first round of “Kicks from the Mark” and be considered the home team.

The remaining team will be considered the visitor and will call the coin toss.

Second and Third team will compete in “Kicks from the Mark” - Winner competes with First Draw

Elimination Matches

In the knock-out round matches, if two teams are still tied after regulation time then the FIFA Kicks at the Mark procedure will be used to determine the winner. In the Final, if the two teams are still tied after regulation time then two 5-minute overtime will be played with the “Golden Goal” rule. If the game is still tied after the 10 minute overtime, the FIFA Kicks at the Mark procedure will be used to determine the winner.

Forfeits

At the discretion of the Tournament Committee, any team proven to be in violation of the Carolinas Cup Policies may be subjected to sanctions including but not limited to forfeiture of all games in the Carolinas Cup with the result being a 3-0 loss. Player eligibility, breach of tournament rules, failure to appear as scheduled, team, player or coach misconduct are all subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the Tournament Committee. Forfeits may be applied retroactive or for singular matches. Forfeits are recorded as a 3-0 loss for the violating team. Entry fees will not be refunded. Teams may not be eligible to advance to the playoffs.

Referees

All matches will be officiated by USSF certified referees. The referee must report the score to the tournament headquarters within 15 minutes of the conclusion of each match.

Match Abandonment

If a match is abandoned after 20 minutes of play “through no fault of either team” the score will stand and the match will be counted. At the Tournament Committee’s discretion, if the match is abandoned “through no fault of either team” under 20 minutes, the match may need to be replayed in its entirety or resumed at the point of stoppage, subject to schedule availability. Teams that abandon a match at any point may be considered having forfeited the match and may be subject to further penalties, under the Forfeit Policy in addition forfeiture of the team’s performance bond.

Player Send Offs

Any player sent off from a match will not be replaced. The player cannot be within sight and sound of the field. A player issued a straight Send Off (Red Card) will automatically serve a minimum one game

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suspension. A player issued a straight Send Off (Red Card) for Violent Conduct will automatically serve a minimum TWO game suspension. A player who is unable to fulfill the suspension penalties for Violent Conduct during the Cup may be suspended in the next Carolinas Cup or suspended during their league play. A player issued two Cautions (Yellow Cards) thus earning a Send Off (Red Card) will be suspended for the next match. All player passes of sent off players will be turned into the tournament committee. The passes will be returned to the team's captain after the suspensions have been served. The tournament committee reserves the right to administer additional penalties as warranted.

Team Officials

Coaches and other team officials shall be subject to all rules pertaining to misconduct contained in the Tournament Policies, including verbally cautioned, expulsions and suspensions.

Protests and Appeals

The Carolinas Cup will be overseen by a tournament committee consisting of a North Carolina Representative, a South Carolina Representative, and a member of the hosting organization. All tournament committee decisions are Final.

Inclement Weather

Regardless of the weather conditions, teams must appear on the field ready to play as scheduled. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the match. Only the Tournament Committee in conjunction with the Match Officials may cancel or postpone a match. In case of severe weather before play, the Tournament Committee may reduce the length of the match by up to 50% or adjust the competition format. Should a match be terminated after 20 minutes due to weather, the match will be considered official and the score will stand. Referees should not begin or continue a match when lightning is seen in the area. In case the entire tournament is postponed, a rain date has been set. Teams are expected to participate. For more weather information call the provided Weather Hotline.

Fees

Entry fees must be paid in full by application deadline. Withdrawal from the tournament after the application cutoff date, will result in forfeiture of the team's entry fee.

Disclaimer

The tournament committee reserves the right to adjust the competition format depending on the number of team entries in each division. The tournament may even close a division due to lack of team registration. In which case, the teams entered will receive the full refund of their registration and performance bond. Neither state association, NCASA nor SCASA will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any person, team, league, or any other association because of participating in the Carolinas Cup. By participating in the Carolinas Cup the team is acknowledging that team officials have read and understood the rules and that the team will abide by all the rules of the Carolinas Cup. THE CAROLINAS CUP'S INTENTION IS TO DETERMINE A CHAMPION FOR EACH DIVISION FROM THE VARIOUS LEAGUE SYSTEMS ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH CAROLINA. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT

CAROLINAS CUP IS DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE GOOD OF THE GAME AND GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. THE TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE MAY SUSPEND WITHOUT RECOURSE TO APPEAL, PLAYERS TEAMS, AND/OR COACHES WHO DEMONSTRATE POOR SPORTSMANSHIP