

ECNL/ECRL/GA Rates Fall 2026

Age	Game Length	CR	AR	AR
U17-U19	90 Minutes	\$130	\$80	\$80
U14-U16	80 Minutes	\$120	\$75	\$75
U13	70 Minutes	\$110	\$65	\$65
U11-U12	60 Minutes	\$100	\$60	\$60

Welcome to the 2026-27 season!

The purpose of this communication is to share with you important changes to the 2026-27 Postseason Qualification & Structure, the new Club Merger & Affiliation Policy, and to inform you of several changes to the 2025-26 ECNL Competition Rules. These documents, rules, and policies are applicable to all clubs in the ECNL, ECNL Regional League, and Pre-ECNL as outlined. It is the responsibility of all clubs and staff to be aware of and compliant with all ECNL Competition Rules and other policies, including these changes and updates, so please review carefully.

2026-27 Postseason Qualification and Structure: *click each link for specific details*

There have been several adjustments in postseason qualification for the 2026-2027 season:

- [ECNL Girls Format](#) – Quarterfinal matches for the U13-17 age groups will now be held at the ECNL Playoffs, meaning only four teams in each age group will advance to the ECNL Girls Finals
- [ECNL RL Girls Venues](#) – Will expand to include 6 ECNL Regional League playoff locations to reduce travel and increase postseason opportunities.
- [ECNL Boys](#) – Postseason qualification Increases to 68 clubs per age group U14-U17, with a new playing format for the “last 8” who qualify.
- [ECNL RL Boys](#) – Will expand to include 6 ECNL RL playoff locations to reduce travel while increasing advancement opportunities.
- ECNL Conference League - As part of the newly established N1 postseason pathway, the launch of the ECNL Conference League Playoffs in 2026-27 will provide additional postseason opportunities for multiple ECNL RL leagues for both boys and girls.

2026-27 ECNL Competition Rules: [CLICK HERE](#) to access the ECNL Competition Rules

There are multiple changes to the ECNL Competition Rules for this upcoming season. The following list does not include all changes, so please review all ECNL Competition Rules to ensure your club and staff is fully informed of and compliant with all rules.

- Rule 3.9.2. Substitution Rules - changes to substitutions at the U13 and U14 age groups
- Exhibit A - Age Group Eligibility reflecting Aug 1-July 31 age divisions
- Exhibit D - new Pre-ECNL Regulations and Requirements on topics from coach education requirements, to game format, to player movement

2026-27 FIFA Laws of the Game Updates:

The ECNL will adopt all mandatory new FIFA law changes, but will not adopt two optional changes:

- The league will NOT adopt the optional law regarding players covering their mouth with their hand to disguise potentially discriminatory behavior or communication because of concerns with its application in youth soccer. To be clear, the league does not tolerate discriminatory behavior or communication of any kind, and any confirmed behavior will result in sanctions.
- The league will NOT adopt the "Only the Captain" protocol for the 2026-27 season before it becomes mandatory in the 2027-28 season. This continues our stance from last season as the law remains optional at this point.

For all FIFA Laws of the Game Changes for 2026/27 [CLICK HERE](#)

ECNL Club Merger & Affiliation Policy

The **ECNL Club Merger & Affiliation Policy** has been significantly updated due to the proliferation of new and proposed club “affiliate” relationships and structures across the country over the past 2 years. This policy, and the associated ECNL Competition Rules, balance two competing principles in player eligibility in the ECNL:

- **Access - the ability for clubs to include some number of exceptional players in their ECNL and ECNL RL teams even if these players are not “full-time” in the club or if they are from significant distances away from the club; and**
- **Development - the importance of protecting the ECNL and ECNL RL as development platforms with connectivity between the regular training environment and competition.**

The new ECNL Club Merger & Affiliation Policy imposes more stringent requirements for clubs to have “approved” affiliate relationships or structures that do not require use of Discovery Players for players who also participate in competition with different clubs, sites, or branches.

The default position of the league is that players who appear on both: (i) rosters in the ECNL or ECNL RL, and (ii) rosters of teams from different clubs, sites, or branches *will be considered Discovery Players unless the league approves a specific club affiliation*. As such, only a limited number of such players are allowed per age group unless the league approves an affiliate relationship as outlined by the policy. *Any club that is considering having players from different clubs, sites, or branches participate in the ECNL or ECNL RL and also participate with teams from a different club, site, or branch, should reach out to their Territory Manager for review of this structure*