

ECYSA

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION



OPERATING RULES FOR TOWNS

Spring 2026

www.ecysa.org

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PLEASE REFER TO THE RULES ONLINE FOR ANY UPDATES

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I. Registration	
A. Overview	
1. The focus of ECYSA is to provide competition between participating Member Organizations.	
2. Each ECYSA Member Organization has jurisdiction over a unique geographic region that may include a town, a city, or multiple towns, as recognized by the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (Mass Youth Soccer or MYSA) and ECYSA.	
3. Member Organizations in good standing with both Massachusetts Youth Soccer and ECYSA may register teams with ECYSA subject to the following:	
a. Every member organization must submit at least three teams to participate in a given season;	
b. Waivers to team minimums and maximums must be submitted to the regional vice president;	
c. For Member Organizations, not in good standing, registration of teams is at the discretion of ECYSA.	
d. To ensure that both boys and girls have the same opportunity to play soccer, ECYSA expects the number of boys teams and girls teams submitted by each Member Organization to be roughly equal. ECYSA may decline to roster any number of teams submitted by a Member Organization if the number of boys teams to girls teams or girls teams to boys teams exceeds a two to one ratio.	
4. Registration date will be set by the Registrar and approved by the Board of Directors of ECYSA. The Registrar will publish registration requirements in advance of each season.	

5. Rosters:
 - a. All rosters and strength charts shall be submitted to the Registrar on or before the dates established.
 - b. Color photographs of the players and coaches shall be submitted pursuant to the procedures established by the Registrar. The players and coaches may not be wearing dark/tinted glasses or a hat/hoodie. The players and coaches shall be facing the camera.
 - c. All player photographs must have been taken within the past two years.
 - d. All player information shall be submitted as required by the Registrar.
6. ECYSA shall have the right to refuse any rosters or strength charts not properly completed.
7. An electronic registration file formatted as specified by the Registrar must be submitted on or before the announced registration date. By submitting the registration file, the submitting organization certifies the accuracy of all data contained therein to the best of their knowledge and ability. Team strength charts must be completed and submitted no later than the specified registration date.
8. After registration, non-resident players will be referred to the proper league official for approval.
9. Each Member Organization shall provide the ECYSA Treasurer with a Fees Submission Form and payment for all fees due at registration. Member Organizations with unpaid invoiced fees may only register with approval from the President of ECYSA or their designee.
10. Member Organizations may form and register combined teams under the following conditions:
 - a. One of the organizations shall be the focal point for registration. A Regional Name may be used in lieu of the lead Member Organization's Name. If a Regional Name is used it must be used by all combined teams submitted by those Member Organizations and all rosters must use the Regional Name.
 - b. Each of the organizations must provide the ECYSA Regional Vice-President and Registrar with a written statement acknowledging their intent to form a combined team and designating the single organization that will be responsible for registration. Written statements must be renewed every season unless ECYSA authorizes a multi- season or multi-year agreement.
 - c. The player eligibility and residency requirements of section I.C.6 apply to combined teams. A player is obligated to participate on the combined team unless they have a release from their Home Organization.
 - d. Acceptance of the combined team into the league and placement of the combined team is at the discretion of the ECYSA Board of Directors.
 - e. The focal point for registration is also responsible to identify the home field that will be

used for each combined team.

11. Member Organizations and coaches are forbidden from recruiting another organization's players without that organization's permission:

- a. Recruiting includes directly or indirectly (e.g. through an intermediary) contacting a player in another organization without the consent of the player's Home Organization.
- b. In cases where a player initiates contact with a different organization, that organization and/or its coaches must advise the player to contact their Home Organization and obtain written permission BEFORE further discussions take place.
- c. Organizations, teams, or coaches who violate this rule may be subject to disciplinary action including forfeiture of post-season play for the organization and/or the team.

12. Grade Verification:

- a. ECYSA has the right to request grade, age and residence verification. This request must be complied with within seven (7) calendar days or the player involved will be considered unregistered and ineligible to play.
- b. Any Member Organization wishing to request grade or age verification of players from another Member Organization is restricted to a maximum of three (3) players per season. Such requests must be accompanied by the required fee, which will be refunded if the grade or age of the challenged player is in error.
- c. ECYSA reserves the right to randomly select a team or teams from any Member Organization(s) for grade, age and/ or residence verification purposes. This request must be complied with within seven (7) working days or the team(s) involved will be considered unregistered and ineligible to play.

13. Rosters:

a. Roster Requirements:

- (1) A team consists of all Registered Players and Coaches meeting the minimum and maximum size limits set forth in the table below.
- (2) A mixed gender team shall be brought to ECYSA's attention to ensure appropriate placement.
- (3) Each team must have a minimum of one (1) coach on the roster to be accepted at registration.

Grade Group	Minimum	Maximum	ECYSA Roster Size	Maximum MTOC Roster Size
G4	7	14		N/A
G6	9	18		18
G8	11	22		22
G10	11	22		22
GPG	11	22		22

b. Roster Exceptions:

- (1) Waivers to the Roster Size Limits (min or max) must be submitted to the regional Vice President for consideration and approval.
- (2) ECYSA is not authorized to grant size limit waivers for MTOC rosters.
- (3) All G8, G10, and PG rosters may carry up to 22 players for MTOC.
- (4) For any MTOC eligible team that exceeds the MTOC Roster Size, the Travel Director and Coach must provide the ECYSA Registrar with a written statement that they understand the implications for post season play contained in Section IV of the Operating Rules for Coaches.
- (5) ECYSA may change roster limits at any time in order to comply with roster limit changes adopted by the Leagues Committee.

14. Any member organization that has not participated for one (1) Calendar year (365 days) may be dropped from the Membership by a vote of the membership and upon written notification from the ECYSA President. The dropped organization will have to reapply for acceptance for future play.

15. Prior to registration each Member Organization shall verify their list of key contacts using ECYSA's online system. Key contacts include the Travel Director, President, Vice President(s), and Registrar. Whenever a Member Organization changes one or more key contact, they shall update the online system.

16. A Member Organization that wants to register a team AFTER the published registration date may apply to the Regional Vice President for an exception.

17. If a Member Organization withdraws a team from the league after the ECYSA Team Placement Meeting, they shall forfeit all fees.

B. Grade Groups

1. Birth date ranges for specific Grade Groups will be listed on a seasonal handout to member organizations and posted on the ECYSA website.

2. Requests for exceptions to and exemptions from the grade guidelines must be submitted via email to the appropriate Regional Vice-President for review and decision.

3. Should the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association and/or the Leagues Committee revise Grade Groups, ECYSA may adopt the new Grade Groups and make exceptions to its operating rules required to implement the change.

C. Player Eligibility

1. All Players must be affiliated with Mass Youth Soccer before they may be registered with ECYSA. Member organizations are responsible to ensure that players are properly registered and affiliated with Mass Youth Soccer. No player may be simultaneously rostered on more than one team participating in ECYSA.

2. Each player is eligible to compete on a team in their Grade Group. Grade Group eligibility is based on grade and birth dates that Mass Youth Soccer establishes. ECYSA will distribute a list of Grade Groups to Member Organizations with seasonal registration documents.

a. Member Organizations may place players in the G4, G6, G8, and G10 grade groups one grade level above their eligible grade group.

b. Players in the G2 or lower grade groups may not be placed above their eligible Grade Group without permission from ECYSA and must conform to MYSA G2 policies.

c. A Member Organization wishing to place a player more than one grade level above their eligible group must obtain permission from ECYSA.

d. A player who is eligible to play in the G10 Grade Group is eligible to play in the PG Grade Group.

e. Once the first game of the season is played, a player placed on a team in a higher-Grade Group must remain in the higher-Grade Group for the duration of the season including any post-season competition.

f. Member Organizations will ensure that players who are required to complete SafeSport training have provided certification of such training. The league may require those certifications to be submitted to the league. Players who participate in a game without being properly certified may cause the game to be considered a forfeit.

3. To participate in post-season play, a player must be registered on or before the date stipulated in the current Mass Youth Soccer Leagues Agreement.

4. Residency. Players are obligated to register with the Member Organization that has jurisdiction where they have their primary residence. This is called the player's Home Organization:

a. Players who have parents or legal guardians residing within the jurisdiction of two different Member Organizations may register with either organization. They may not register with both organizations.

b. Players who move may continue to register with their previous Home Organizations until the first time they play for their new Home Organization. The player is considered "grandfathered" to that Member Organization.

c. Players who attend school in a different community may register with the Member Organization that has jurisdiction where the school is located.

d. If Member Organizations, parents, or legal guardians cannot agree on a player's single Home Organization, ECYSA may assign that player to a single Home Organization and such assignment will be binding on the player.

e. For players who register with other than their Home Organization, ECYSA may request substantiation that they meet one or more of the conditions provided by Sections I.C.4.a, I.C.4.b, or I.C.4.c. Member Organizations must provide substantiation within seven (7) Calendar days or the player involved will be considered unregistered and ineligible to play.

5. Non-Resident Players - Players who do not register with their Home Organization are termed non-resident Players.

a. Players who desire to register with a different Member Organization must obtain written permission (a release) from their Home Organization and provide the release to the Member Organization for which they want to play.

b. Member Organizations seeking to roster non-resident players must do the following:

(1) request a written release with a stated reason for each non-resident player from the player's Home Organization

(2) provide a copy of the release to the requesting organization's ECYSA regional Vice President to confirm that the request complies with the principles of the league. The ECYSA VP approval shall be sent to the ECYSA Registrar for player registration.

(3) provide ECYSA with a new or updated Non- Resident Player Report listing all non-resident players.

c. Releases to play for a different Member Organization in the fall season are also good for the spring season, unless it states otherwise. Releases for the spring season shall only be good for that season.

d. If a Member Organization declines permission to play for a different Member Organization or does not respond to a request within seven (7) days of the request's date, the player may re-submit the original, dated request to the appropriate ECYSA Vice-President, who may authorize or deny the request.

e. If a player's Home Organization does not offer a team in the player's grade and gender group, the player must still obtain a note from their Home Organization confirming that there is not an opportunity for them to play. If a player does not have a grade assignment, then they shall play with the grade based on their birthdate of their home organization's local public school system.

f. ECYSA may deny any Member Organization from rostering a non-resident player, if that player's participation is inconsistent with the principles of the League.

g. Email is considered an acceptable form of written communication for player release.

6. Players who do not belong to an ECYSA Member Organization who want to register on an ECYSA team must follow the following procedure:

(1) request a written release from their Home Organization,

(2) request a written release from their League President or designee,

- (3) request a written release from the ECYSA President or designee,
- (4) provide a copy of the release to the requesting organization's ECYSA regional Vice President to confirm that the request complies with the principles of the league. The ECYSA VP approval shall be sent to the ECYSA Registrar for player registration.
- (5) provide ECYSA with a new or updated Non-Resident Player Report listing all non-resident players.

7. Players residing outside of Massachusetts who want to register on an ECYSA team must comply with Mass Youth Soccer's out of state release process and any applicable process required by their local and state organization.

8. A player who is serving a suspension issued by Mass Youth Soccer or ECYSA of three or more consecutive games is not eligible for placement on a roster while serving such suspension. A suspended player must apply to and be reinstated by the ECYSA Board of Directors prior to being placed on a roster.

9. Playing Down

- a. The term "playing down" refers to a situation where a player from an older Grade Group may be allowed to participate on a team in a younger Grade Group.
- b. Requests to play down must be submitted to the regional vice president along with substantiation.
- c. Member Organizations may substantiate a play down request based on physical, mental, or behavioral issues as well as accommodations based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Member Organizations may place players' one grade group down to play with classmates based on Mass Youth Soccer Policy. These players may be at most 1 year older than their classmates by MYSA designated grade/groups.

10. Gender Identify Policy

Gender Identification Requests to Play on a team other than the gender on the player's birth certificate shall be submitted to the ECYSA Regional Vice President for approval. The request will be evaluated pursuant to the Mass Youth Soccer Gender Identity Policy currently in effect.

D. Coach's Eligibility

1. Every Coach and Assistant coach must be properly registered and affiliated with the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association. Each Coach and Assistant coach (18 and over) must display a valid Mass Youth photo I.D credential with them at each game/practice. Each Member Organization certifies that all coaches they register with ECYSA are fully compliant with Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) requirements and have completed a Concussion Awareness Training course specified by Mass Youth Soccer.

2. Each Coach and Assistant coach must have a valid ECYSA photo I.D. card.

3. Any coach without a valid MYSA credential and a valid ECYSA coach card at any ECYSA sanctioned or recognized events (games, tournaments, exhibitions, etc.) will not be allowed to coach, will be treated as a spectator, and any invalid card presented will be retained by the referee or any other ECYSA official for submission to ECYSA.

4. Coaches and Assistant Coaches may be transferred, dropped and added to any team without limitation or deadline.

5. The coach's name does not have to be listed on the printed roster.
6. Properly registered coaches with a valid ECYSA ID card are eligible to coach any ECYSA team.
7. Either the head coach or one of the assistant coaches listed on the registration roster must attend the Spring Coaches Meeting. If one of the coaches does not attend one of the scheduled meetings, then the coaches will not be eligible to coach the first game of the season. The team can play the first game with a registered substitute coach. Games affected by this situation cannot be rescheduled for any reason. Coaches not attending a scheduled meeting will be required to attend a special make-up meeting on/or before the first day of the season. If the coach does not attend the special meeting, he/she will not be allowed to coach during the entire season.
8. A coach who is serving a suspension issued by Mass Youth Soccer or ECYSA of three or more consecutive games is not eligible to participate in any ECYSA Sanctioned event or be issued an ECYSA coach card. A suspended coach must apply to and be reinstated by the ECYSA Board of Directors prior to being placed on a roster or participating with any Member Organization.

E. Player and Coach Registration

1. A player is considered registered if he/she is properly affiliated and listed on the proper affiliated approved roster for the team he/she is playing for. To be acceptable, rosters and photos must be completed in accordance with the instructions issued by the ECYSA Registrar. They must be submitted by the date set by the Board of Directors.
2. The head coach and the assistant coaches of each team are considered registered if they are properly registered and affiliated with MYSA and ECYSA and have a current identification card.

F. Transfers/Addds

1. Note: A team shall be limited to a total of three transferred players per season. A transaction fee will be charged for transfers/addds after the initial registration file and package is submitted. The completed add/drop/transfer form must be submitted to the Registrar when Transferring, Adding or Dropping a player.
2. Registered, affiliated players may be transferred until 9:00 p.m. on the Wednesday after their current team's second game has been played.
3. Note: A Registered affiliated player is a player who is affiliated with their Member Organization, ECYSA, and Mass Youth Soccer through proper registration procedures and is included on a team roster as submitted to the ECYSA Registrar.
4. Non-registered affiliated players may be added at any time to teams that have less than maximum allowed players rostered per I.A.13.a.

Note: A Non-registered affiliated player is a player who is affiliated with their Member

Organization, ECYSA, and Mass Youth Soccer through proper registration procedures, however is not included on a team roster as submitted to the ECYSA Registrar.

5. Transfers are based upon changes to a standard ECYSA roster processed in Section I.A.5. A drop and add of a registered affiliated player is considered a transfer. (See Section I.F.2 above for deadlines.) The replacement being a registered affiliated player from another team is a transfer, who is counted against the maximum limits of both teams participating in the transfer.

6. A drop and add of a previously non-registered affiliated player counts as an add. (See Section I.F.2 above for deadlines).

7. Players may be transferred up to an older Grade Group, or a higher competition level subject to Section I.C.2.c.

8. For player transfers or adds that do not fall within other sections of the rules, a Travel Director, or authorized designee approved by ECYSA, may submit a written transfer or add request to the appropriate regional Vice President for review and written approval.

II. Competition

A. Organization of Divisions & Groups

1. ECYSA's Board of Directors will organize teams into Divisions and Groups based on grade, gender, and ability. Final placement is at ECYSA's discretion.

2. G4 Divisions & Groups

- G4 teams shall be organized into two Divisions: Select and Regional. The Select Division is for highly skilled teams selected based on ability. The Regional Division is for evenly balanced, recreational teams. Travel Directors should not place competitive teams in the Regional Division.
- Teams placed in the Select Division will be organized into ability-based groups with less regard for the distance traveled to a game.
- Teams placed in the Regional Division will be placed in groups comprised of teams from neighboring Member Organizations and possibly teams from their own Organization. The makeup of the regional groups will depend on the number of teams participating and may vary from season to season. The intent is to provide competitive soccer while also minimizing the travel time to games.
- All G4 play shall be non-results orientated in accordance with Mass Youth Soccer rules. ECYSA will not publish game scores or standings. ECYSA will provide Member Organizations results and standings to be used only for future team placement purposes and not for broad dissemination.
- Travel Directors must request placement in the Select or Regional group at the time of registration.

3. G6 to PG Divisions & Groups – General

a. ECYSA will organize the teams into two categories: MTOC and County. MTOC Divisions are for select teams; County Divisions are for recreational teams.

b. MTOC teams will be eligible to represent ECYSA in the Massachusetts Tournament of Champions (MTOC). MTOC eligibility will be determined by the results of the ECYSA Championship Tournament.

c. County teams will be eligible to represent their Member Organizations in the ECYSA Championship Tournament but are not eligible for participation at MTOC.

4. G6 & G8 Divisions & Groups –Detail

a. Unless otherwise decided or determined by the ECYSA Board of Directors, each playing season ECYSA will organize teams into up to five descending Divisions including MTOC-1, MTOC-2, County-1, County-2 and County-3. The final number of Divisions will depend on the total number of registered teams within each Grade 6 and Grade 8 gender group. Groupings of teams within each Division shall typically be, but not limited to, group sizes of 8 or 6 teams unless an odd number of teams in a group becomes unavoidable. The team placement groupings of the groups within MTOC-1 MTOC-2, County-1 and County-2 will account for team placement target percentages and target percentage ranges for each division until it becomes mathematically unworkable. At this time, the intention during team placements is for each Division total of playoff qualifying teams to be limited to only creating a maximum of 10 playoff qualifying teams for a Spring season. Note that for competitive strength rating reasons and group spacing, an organization that submits a proportionately large number of teams in a Grade Gender Group may possibly have more than one team placed into the same team group.

b. Travel Directors must request placement in either MTOC or County. ECYSA will seed teams into either the tier 1 division or the tier 2 division or the tier 3 division, if applicable.

c. MTOC-1 teams will be eligible to represent ECYSA in Division 1 at MTOC. MTOC-2 teams will be eligible to represent ECYSA in Division 2 at MTOC.

d. The optimum target percentage of teams placed in each Division and the approximate acceptable target percentage range of teams placed in each Division is as follows:

For Four Divisions:

MTOC-1 Optimum target percentage 20% -
Approximate acceptable target percentage range 15%-25%

MTOC-2 Optimum target percentage 30% -
Approximate acceptable target percentage range 25%-35%

County-1 Optimum target percentage 30% -
Approximate acceptable target percentage range 25%-35%

County-2 Optimum target percentage 20% -
Approximate acceptable target percentage range 15%-25%

5. G10 Divisions & Groups

a. Formation of G10 Divisions and Groups depends on the number of teams that

register. The ECYSA Board will strive to organize the teams into three divisions: MTOC-1, MTOC- 2 and County.

b. ECYSA may form a County Division if at least 4 teams of appropriate ability are so placed by ECYSA. The County division is intended to be recreational.

6. PG Divisions & Groups

a. Formation of PG Divisions and Groups depends on the number of teams that register. The ECYSA Board will attempt to organize the teams into two divisions: MTOC and County.

b. ECYSA may form a County Division if at least 4 teams of appropriate ability are so placed by ECYSA. The County division is intended to be recreational.

B. Team Placement

1. ECYSA PLACEMENT - Youth soccer players are generally grouped together on teams based upon individual athletic ability, overall skill level, maturity, and the level of skills of the team on which they are placed. Whatever method a Member Organization uses for its player selection and team placement process it should be emphasized that the objective is to place youth soccer players at a level of competition that is most beneficial for their own development.

2. The Appropriate ECYSA Grade Group Division Director will place teams based on team make-up, team records from previous seasons, and input from Travel Directors. Each Division Director's placement is subject to approval by the ECYSA Board of Directors:

a. As a guideline, approximately half of each organization's teams will be placed in the MTOC division(s) and half in the County division(s).

b. All Member Organizations must report the number of club players for each registered team on the ECYSA Team Registration Form. In general teams with club players will be placed in an MTOC Division. Teams with five or more club players are typically placed in the MTOC-1 Division. Placement of teams with club players is at the discretion of the ECYSA Division Director and subject to approval by the ECYSA Board of Directors.

c. Any team having a player from another member organization, not consistent with Section I.C.5.a through Section I.C.5.d, would be required to play in MTOC 1, after conforming to Section I.C.6.

d. Overall Division Champions, who remain in the same Grade Group with 50% or more returning players, will move up one Division when applicable.

e. Overall Division Champions, who move up in Grade Group with 50% or more returning players, will play no lower than one Division lower than current Division.

f. ECYSA Reserves the right to place a G6 team requested by the Member Organization to play County 1/County 2 with a full roster of 20 players in MTOC 2. This would then require the Member Organization to reduce the roster for this team to 18 players to meet the rostering rule

for MTOC 1 & MTOC 2

3. Regular Season Group Seeding for G10 and PG teams:

a. G10 and PG playoffs will be determined by ECYSA based upon availability of Grade Group teams and placement. The playoff format selected will be made available to the coaches prior to the start of the season.

4. Final team placement will be decided at the placement meeting, which will resolve any disagreements with the appropriate ECYSA Grade Group Division Director's recommendations. The only restrictions on the meeting's power are that teams cannot be placed below State Tournament level against their request.