

# **U.S. SOCCER DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY REGULATIONS**



**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 program and competition that will be conducted and administered by the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (“USSF”). The Development Academy consists of a league and a tournament 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. Competition Committee: The Competition Committee shall consist of the USSF National Team Head Coaches. The Competition 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 Competition” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy League and/or U.S. Soccer Development Academy Finals.

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

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

“Academy Game Officials” – means the Center Referee, assistant referee and fourth official overseeing an Academy League Game or Academy Finals Game.

“Academy Finals” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition held at the conclusion of the Academy League season among the top teams in each Academy Conference.

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

“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.

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

“Team Manager” – 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 Competition Game.

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

F. Contact Information:

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## 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](http://www.ussoccer.com). Applications must be returned to the Academy Staff by August 1, 2007 and March 1st for new applications in all subsequent years. The Competition Committee will review applications as they are received and notification will be provided by August 15, 2007 and April 1st in all subsequent years.

C. Criteria for Selection: Clubs will be chosen based on the following criteria: (1) Competition Committee analysis; (2) record of success with elite player development; (3) record of success in national competitions; (4) the quality of the club’s facilities; and (5) other criteria as determined by U.S. Soccer’s coaches. The Competition 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. Academy Clubs may also have their membership terminated should they violate any of the Academy Competition Rules and 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 leaguewide 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 (See article B in Appendix.)

C. Membership Agreement: Each Academy Club must provide a signed copy of their Membership Agreement by their Club President or Chairman of the Club Board of Directors by September 1.

#### D. Development

1. Training Days: Each Academy Team will be expected to hold at least three training sessions per week during the Academy 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 may 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. The only permissible soccer related reasons

to miss Development Academy activities are National Team duty and the players' High School teams. 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-16 and U-18. The U-16 team should include whomever the club believes are the best 14 and 15 year old players available; the U-18 team should include whomever the club believes are the best 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 may sacrifice their performance bond and their club will lose its standing as an Academy Club. The Academy Regular Season may 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.

8. **Recruiting Players/Territories:** 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. 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 and schedule for adding and dropping players). Clubs should note, however, that coaches and administrators may be subject to the rules of USSF Organization members regarding recruiting for non-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 Membership Department, 1801 South Prairie Avenue, Chicago, IL 60616.

B. **Travel Costs:** All costs associated with the travel to competitions (other than the National Finals) 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 \$1 per player and \$25 per coach. The Academy reserves the right to change fees for subsequent seasons with 90 days notice.

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: At the start of every season, each team will pay half of the referee fees for all of their games to USSF and USSF will be responsible for compensating referees after each 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. National Finals: 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 Development Academy Finals.

B. Best Practices Coaching Seminars: USSF will provide room and board for two (2) Academy Coaches from each Academy Club to attend each Best Practices Coaching Seminar. The Academy Club must send at least one (1) coach to each Best Practices Coaching Seminar. The Academy Club may pay a registration fee and all costs for up to two (2) additional coaches to attend the Best Practices Coaching Seminar.

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

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

E. Administrative Meeting: The Development Academy will provide room and board for one (1) club representative from each Academy Club to attend a mandatory Administrative Meeting each year.

F. 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.

G. 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.

## **VI. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION**

### **A. Eligible Players**

1. U-18: Each Academy Club shall ensure the following when selecting its representative Academy Team for the U-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-16: Each Academy Club shall ensure the following when selecting its Academy Team for the U-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 Academy League season.

### **B. Master 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 Team roster. Each roster shall be published on the official U.S. Soccer Development Academy website at [www.ussoccer.com/Academy](http://www.ussoccer.com/Academy), and shall be considered the official Academy Player roster of the Academy Club. There is a minimum of 20 players per Academy Team, and no limit to the number of players on the roster. Only 18 players from the team roster will be eligible to participate in each game and these players must be placed on the official score sheet of the game (showing players that will start, be substitutes and are suspended). The official score sheet shall be presented to the referee prior to the game and should also include team officials. The Academy Staff will update the Academy Team rosters weekly on the Academy website to reflect any suspensions, additions or subtractions of players 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 foreign players on the roster, as long as they have the proper international clearance.

2. 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, Drivers License or Passport, are properly registered and are not subject to suspension.

3. Ineligible Player: Players listed on the Master Roster but not eligible to play, due to reasons such as missing Academy registration forms, proof of citizenship, 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.

4. **Illegal Player:** Any player that does not appear on the Master Roster shall be considered an illegal player. Any Academy Club using an illegal player shall be subject to a fine as determined by the Academy Staff, a deduction of three points in the Academy League standings, as well as a forfeiture (by a 0-3 margin) of any Academy Games in which the illegal player participated.

5. **Player Registration Cards:** All Academy Players and Academy Coaches must present their U.S. Soccer Development Academy Player / Coach Identification Card to the Referee prior to the game. If the individual's picture is not on the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Player / Coach Identification Card, the individual will not be eligible for 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 is not considered registered until the team receives a U.S. Soccer Development Academy Player Identification Card from the Academy Staff. Other organization passes may not be used as a form of identification. The only identification for an Academy Game is the Academy Player Card. Academy Staff will be responsible for setting up the procedures for issuing the Player Academy Cards and notifying Academy Clubs regarding this procedure. Temporary player cards may be issued for temporary Developmental Players not included on the Master Roster.

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 Team Rosters for the U-16 and U-18 teams, including a minimum of 20 players per team, not including developmental players. There is no maximum number of players required for an Academy Team Roster provided an Academy Team does not violate the Minimum Start Requirement.

b. **Roster Change Window:** At any time during the season prior to March 15th, Academy Teams may remove a player from its official Team Roster.

c. **Roster Freeze:** At any time during the season prior to April 1st, Academy Teams may add a player to its official Team Roster.

d. **Limitations on adds/drops:** Academy Teams shall be permitted a maximum of four (4) drops of players per season from their Academy Team Roster.

e. **Player Transfers:** Transfer of a player from one Academy Team to another shall be treated like any other add/drop. A player who wishes to transfer to a new Academy Team must obtain approval from his original Academy Club before transferring. Academy Staff shall have the authority, upon a written request by the player, to approve a transfer of a player without Club approval, or after the March 15th deadline, in extraordinary circumstances (such as, a change in residence by the player).

f. **Developmental Players:** Each Academy Club may submit a developmental player list of up to ten (10) Developmental Players for each Academy Team to participate in Academy games. A Developmental Player must be a registered player on an Academy Club's non-Academy Team. 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 Development 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. No more than six (6) Developmental Players may be placed on a game roster for any single Academy Game. Developmental Players cannot participate in the Academy Finals.

g. **Playing Up:** Players on the U-16 Academy Team may be selected for the U-18 Game Day Roster and they are not subject to the 30% start requirement for the U-18 Team's Academy Games. Players on the U-16 Academy Team playing on the U-18 Academy Team do not count toward the ten (10) allowed Developmental Players.

7. **Minimum Start Requirement:** All Academy Players, including goalies, are required to start in at least 30% 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 and/or added, new players shall be assigned to a specific roster "slot." The player(s) assigned to each roster slot must, between them, start at least 30% of the of the team's Academy Games during the season. The Academy Staff will have the authority, upon request by the Club, to allow exceptions to this rule in exceptional circumstances (for example, a serious injury suffered by a player).

C. **Registration:** All Registrations are completed online at [www.ussoccer.com/Academy](http://www.ussoccer.com/Academy). 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
- Drivers License/State ID with picture

Furthermore, the Academy Club must submit two passport sized photographs for each Academy player. Academy Staff shall have the authority to establish additional procedures, including deadlines, for registration of players.

## **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 August 15, 2007 [and July 1<sup>st</sup> in all subsequent years]. The season will be held from September/October 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 National Finals will be held each year in mid-July. If an Academy Team would like to request a change to their schedule after release of the final schedule for the Academy League, the Club will have to complete a 'Game Change Request Form'. 'Game Change Request Forms' can be found at [www.ussoccer.com/Academy](http://www.ussoccer.com/Academy). Forms must be submitted to the Academy Staff at least 28 days prior to the game and 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 and approximate kick-off times (i.e. morning, afternoon) 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 September 15, 2007, 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.

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

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 five (5) 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 five (5) 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 [www.ussoccer.com/Academy](http://www.ussoccer.com/Academy). Official Academy League standings include wins, losses, ties, goals scored for, goals scored against and total league points. All standings are generated by the Game 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 48 hours to verify their game results with the Academy Staff.

#### Tie-Breakers

Academy Competitions will recognize the following tie-breakers, listed in order of importance:

1. Total Points
2. Goal Differential
3. Goals Scored
4. Head-to-Head Results
5. Lottery conducted by Academy Staff

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 December or early January). For the 2007-08 season, this window shall run from December 3 through December 9 and December 24 through January 2.
- Spring Window (for periods near Easter week). For the 2007-08 season, this window shall run from March 16 through March 26.
- Summer Window (for periods after the end of Development Academy season). For the 2007-08 season, this window shall run from July 23 through September 1.

### **VIII. DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY TOURNAMENT COMPETITION**

A. National Finals: The top Academy Team from each Conference will meet in Carson, CA in mid-July to compete in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy National Finals.

B. National Finals Roster: The Academy Team's roster for the National Championships will be increased to 22 players. The Academy Staff will arrange travel for 22 players, the head coach and two volunteers to attend the National Finals. The Academy Staff will arrange airfare, hotels, meals and ground transportation for the 25 person travel party. The Academy Team will be responsible for all other expenses.

C. Draw: The draw for the final competition of the Academy National Finals will take place at the Finals location and shall be a blind-draw.

D. National Finals 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 Academy Competition Tie-Breaker criteria.

## **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 Academy Games will be two 45 minute halves.

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

**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 impose a fine.

## **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 an annual background check. 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 an annual risk management application, which can be accessed online via the U.S. Soccer Development Academy website. 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 up to two individuals per 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 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 that 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: 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.

B. Soccer Balls: All Academy Games are to be played with the Academy Game Ball. The Academy will provide Academy Game Balls at no cost to the Academy Clubs. No game can be played without Academy Game Balls. There shall be a minimum of four (4) 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;
2. Have had pass cards issued by the Development Academy; and
3. For whom registration fees have been paid.

B. How to File a Claim: To file a medical insurance claim, go to the Development Academy webpage at [www.ussoccer.com/Academy](http://www.ussoccer.com/Academy) and click on Accident Claims Information.

C. Steps to processing Insurance Claims

1. Prior to submitting a claim to the Academy Staff, immediately submit a claim for all medical expenses to the Company that administers your own personal or group insurance or healthcare plan (including Major Medical coverage). If you have coverage through an HMO or similar facility, you must use that facility first or the claim will not be covered under this policy.

2. To obtain a copy of the claim form you may contact the Academy Staff or visit the plan administrator's website and choose the Development Academy from the rolldown list, then choose Accident Claims Information. Complete the first page and top portion of second page of the claim form marked 'To Be Completed by Insured'. After your other insurance or healthcare plan has paid the medical expenses up to the policy limits, attach any unpaid bills and copies of payments made by your insurance company to our claim form and mail to the address shown below.

3. Please check and make sure that:

- a) An Official or Administrator of the Policyholder has completed his/her section of the claim form.
- b) You have completed and signed the Parent/Guardian or Insured's Statement of other Insurance.
- c) The Medical Records Authorization must be signed and dated. If you want payments to be sent directly to your doctor or healthcare provider, sign the Payment Authorization Section.
- d) You have attached all unpaid bills to this form.
- e) You have attached any Explanation of Benefits forms that you have received from your Primary insurance carrier or other healthcare plan.
- f) You have completed the front of the claims form.

4. Subsequent bills should be sent in as you receive them. Please write the claimant's

name, policy number and date of accident on all subsequent bills. A new claim form is not necessary.

5. After you have completed the claim form, the bottom portion of the second page marked 'To Be Completed by Policyholder/Administrator' must be filled out and authorized by the Academy Staff. Please send the claim form and all relevant materials to: U.S. Soccer Federation, Development Academy Member Services, 1801 South Prairie Ave., Chicago, IL 60616

### **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 collect those fees from the Academy Clubs and pay the Referees and Assistant Referees.

C. Game Report: After each game, the Referee shall complete and sign the official Game Report Form. The Referee shall send it in to the Academy Staff within 24 hours of the game. The Academy Team Manager and/or Academy Coach will be responsible for reviewing and signing the Referee's Game Report within 48 hours of the game. The Game Report will be used to generate standings, track suspensions and gather statistics.

D. Game Information: On the Game Report Form, 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.

E. Opposing Players: After each game, each team is responsible for providing three recommended players from the opposing team for consideration in player identification camps.

### **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, Competition 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.