MLK CLASSIC

2026 TOURNAMENT RULES

1. REGISTRATION

a. For check-in to the tournament, the team is required to provide the team's player cards. Also, the team must have available for presentation upon request during the tournament: copy of birth certificates or passport and insurance forms required by the home association.

b. The team must present picture identification cards issued by the team's Federation Organization Member (USYS, AYSO, US Club Soccer, Cal South, SAY Soccer, USSSA, other).

2. TEAM ROSTERS & GUEST PLAYERS

a. SoCal Elite Sports tournaments are sanctioned through US Club Soccer but we accept official team rosters and player cards from US Club Soccer, SAY Soccer, USSSA, AYSO, Cal South, and any USYSA State Association.

b. All players, including guest players, must be listed on the team's roster at the time of check-in.

c. A player may play on two different teams, provided ALL of the following requirements are met:
   - Teams are in two different age groups
   - Player is age eligible for both age groups
   - Player is listed on the GotSport roster for both teams prior to check-in.

d. There is no limit to the number of guest players a team may bring, provided they do not exceed the roster maximum for their age group and have required player card for each guest player.

3. PLAYERS JERSEYS & NUMBERS

a. Each team must have numbered jerseys for all players.

b. No two players may have the same number.

c. Player names and jersey numbers must match the roster at the time of check-in.

d. Goalkeeper jerseys must be of different color than field players on both teams.

e. Jerseys must be the same primary color, but do not have to be of identical style. If the referee orders a jersey change due to color confusion, players/teams must comply.

f. Home Team is team listed first (left) on the schedule. Home Team will wear white or lighter-colored jerseys. AWAY TEAMS NOT TO WEAR WHITE JERSEYS. In case of similar jerseys (i.e. Neon Jerseys), then Away team changes.

g. Pennies (mesh scrimmage vests) may be used over the jersey to resolve color conflicts as long as they jersey numbers show through the pennies to the referee's satisfaction.

h. Players must wear shin guards that are age appropriate and completely covered by socks. Referees may require players to leave the field and change or correct improper/unsafe equipment.

i. Shoes with metal cleats/studs are not allowed.

j. Violators will be removed from the field by the referee and not allowed on the field of play until the player equipment issue has been corrected.

k. Players cannot wear anything that is dangerous to themselves, or the other players and no jewelry is allowed. Braces and other medically required support apparatus must have no dangerous metal or hard plastic exposed, unless covered with a soft protective covering (bubble wrap, etc). The referee shall make the final decision whether the player can play.

4. TEAM BENCH

a. Team players and coaches are to be on opposite side of the field from all spectators. Only rostered players, coaches, assistant coaches, trainers and team managers are allowed the sideline bench area. The home team will occupy either the North of West side of playing field.

5. SPECTATOR AREAS

a. Spectators are to be on the same half of the field across from their team bench. No one may spectate or loiter behind the goal line and up to the 18 yard line/goal box on either end of the field. SoCal Elite Sports is not responsible for bodily injury or property damage.

6. MATCH BALL

a. The Home Team will present three match balls to the referee.

7. PROTESTS

a. The only protests allowed are for an ineligible player. All protest must be reported in writing, with a One Hundred Dollar ($100) cashier's check, money order, or cash. If a team wins the protest, their protest fee will be returned.

8. MATCH DURATION & PLAYING FORMAT

a. Teams will play their appropriate match duration and playing format.

Divisions	Halves	Format	Roster Max	Ball Size	Overtime
U7 - 2019	25 minutes	7v7	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U8 - 2018	25 minutes	7v7	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U9 - 2017	25 minutes	7v7	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U10 - 2016	25 minutes	7v7	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U11 - 2015	30 minutes	9v9	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U12 - 2014	30 minutes	9v9	Unlimited	4	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U13 - 2013	35 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U14 - 2012	35 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U15 - 2011	35 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U16 - 2010	40 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U17 - 2009	40 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U18 - 2007/2008	40 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's
U20 - 2005/2006	40 minutes	11v11	Unlimited	5	2 x 5 minutes, then PK's

9. SCORING SYSTEM

a. Scoring system for preliminary (pool) games will be as follows:
   - 3 points for a win
   - 1 point for a tie
   - 0 points for a loss
   - A forfeit game will be scored at a 3-0 win.
     - The forfeiting team will receive zero (0) points for the match.
     - The team being forfeited to will receive points for a 3-0 win, and any additional points scored during play at the time of forfeiture will count towards goal differential.

b. The Tournament Director reserves the right to remove any team from the tournament and/or make them ineligible for the play-off rounds for intentionally forfeiting a game.

10. INTENTIONAL & UNINTENTIONAL FORFEITS

a. Forfeits may be declared for the following reasons, but not limited to:
   - A team has not arrived on the field after ten (10) minutes of the scheduled start time.
   - Teams with the minimum number of players within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled start time refusing to take the field.
   - Game abandonment
   - Players, coaches, and spectators refusal to leave the complex.

Format	Minimum to Start	Minimum to Continue
7v7	5	5
9v9	6	6
11v11	7	7

11. GAME CARDS

a. Both teams will turn in game cards to Tournament Headquarters after the game. Please verify the referee has accurately recorded the field number, game time, team names, score, and misconduct (red and yellow cards).

12. KNOCKOUT STAGES

a. If teams are tied on points after their preliminary (pool) games are completed, the following tiebreakers procedures will be used to determine the team advancing:
   1. Goal Differential
   2. Goals For
   3. Goals Against
   4. Head to Head
   5. Most Shutouts
   6. Kicks from the mark, aka. Penalty Kicks

13. SUBSTITUTIONS

a. There will be free substitutions, with the referee's consent at the following times:
   - A player receiving a yellow card (the player carded only)
   - Prior to a throw-in for the team in possession (the opposing team may substitute when the team in possession subs)
   - Prior to a goal kick
   - After a goal by either team
   - After an injury by either team when the referee stops the play
   - At half-time by either team
   - At the referee's discretion

14. SEND OFF & DISCIPLINARY

a. An official send-off is when the referee ejects the coach, player, or spectator from the remainder of the game. Any send-offs should be reported to the Tournament Director immediately following the match. Any players, coaches, or spectators sent-off by the referee must leave the complex in a timely manner by, at least, going to the parking lot or tournament headquarters and having NO form of communication with the team. If a player's parent or guardian is not in attendance, they may report to the tournament headquarters with a manager or a team parent until the game has concluded.

15. MATCH SUSPENSIONS

a. The Tournament Committee and/or Tournament Director have the right to adjust match suspensions.
   - Any player or coach officially sent-off (other than on account of receiving two cautions in the same game) shall automatically sit out the next played tournament game with the same team.
   - Any player receiving three (3) cautions (yellow cards) in the tournament must sit out the next played tournament game with their team. If the third caution occurred in the last game of the tournament for that player, that player would be required to sit out their next scheduled game played.
   - Any players, coaches, spectators sent-off for fighting (punching, kicking, etc) or spitting, or is the player's second tournament send-off, is subject to expulsion from the remainder of the tournament.

16. GAME DECISIONS

a. All referee game decisions are final.
b. The Tournament Director is empowered to make all decisions regarding the competition during the tournament.
c. Tournament Director decisions are final in all matters. No appeals will be allowed beyond that point.
d. In the event the referee or linesman are missing from the field, report immediately to your Field Coordinator or to Tournament Headquarters. In the event the linesmen are not available, each team is required to provide a "club linesman".
e. Nets and flags are provided by the tournament.
f. There will be NO use of any Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system or spectator video in Fairplex Sports tournaments.

17. DEVICES

a. The use of communication devices for the purpose of coaching is not allowed.

b. Drones and Unmanned Aircrafts
   - All types of unmanned aircrafts, including drones, will not be allowed to fly over Fairplex Sports tournaments.

18. WEATHER

a. In the event that a game needs to be stopped due to inclement weather, lightning, etc., you will be instructed by one or all of the following methods:
   - Notification System utilized by playing facility
   - Notified by Fairplex Sports staff
   - Notified by Referees
   - Air Horns

b. All players, coaches, and spectators go to their cars. DO NOT leave the site. The air horns will sound again or you will be informed by a tournament official when everything is all clear. You should then return to the field. If it is necessary for you to check with Tournament Headquarters regarding this situation, we ask that only the team's head coach or team manager go to the headquarters tent.

c. Games will be suspended 30 minutes after the last lightning or thunder has left the vicinity (roughly 6 mile radius). Inclement weather is always a possibility and such weather may result in delayed, abbreviated, or canceled games. The tournament committee will attempt to reschedule games to insure that each team will play a full schedule for the tournament. Games may be shortened or postponed or scheduled at a different site in order to meet this goal. The Tournament Director has the authority to suspend games due to weather.

d. If the game has played one full half (is, at least, AT halftime) but is stopped short of full time, other than acts on the part of one of the teams or its spectators, the game shall be considered complete.

e. In the event of inclement weather, park closure, or any other forced cancellations outside of our control, the format for the tournament play and/or completion of the tournament will be determined by the Tournament Director. Every attempt will be made to avoid cancellation. All communications with regard to schedule changes/modifications will be made directly with the coach and team manager/contact listed within Gotsport.

f. If Quarterfinals or Semi-Finals cannot be played, no winners will be declared. If Finals cannot be completed or the Final is in the second half with a tied score, Co-Champions will be awarded.

g. Once game time temperature exceeds 90 degrees, the Tournament Director may institute water breaks. The water breaks would occur in each half and the official game time will stop during the water breaks. If the restart is delayed, the referee, upon his discretion, may issue a yellow card to the team causing the delay.

19. WITHDRAWS

a. Once accepted into the tournament, any team that withdraws from the tournament or does not complete all required scheduled games, will not receive any refund and may be banned from SoCal Elite Sports tournaments.

20. U11 & BELOW GUIDELINES

a. Per US Soccer Guidelines: Players U11 and younger shall NOT engage in heading. When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

21. 7V7 STANDARDS OF PLAY

a. Build Out Line
   - The build out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting. When the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. The opposing team must also move behind the build out line during a goal kick until the ball is put into play. Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed). After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal. Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build out line. However, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner, but he or she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.

   - If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the punt or drop kick occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

   - The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the build out line. Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line.

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   - To support the intent of the development rule, coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by opponents not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the build out line prior to the ball being put into play. Coaches are responsible for addressing these types of issues with their players. Referees should be flexible when enforcing the 6 second rule and counting the time of possession should only behind when all opponents have moved behind the build out line.

22. UPCOMING TOURNAMENT DATES

a. MLK Classic: January 17 - 19, 2026
b. IE Elite Cup: February 14 - 16, 2026
c. LA Strong Cup: March 28 - 29, 2026
d. Elsinore Cup: May 16 - 17, 2026
e. California Super Cup - Boys: May 23 - 25, 2026
f. California Super Cup - Girls: May 30 - 31, 2026
g. Summer Challenge: July 18 - 19, 2026
h. College Showcase: July 25 - 26, 2026
i. Labor Day Classic: September 5-7, 2026
j. Thanksgiving Classic: Novemebr 27 - 29, 2026