



**DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
RULES & REGULATIONS
2019-2020**

**U.S. Soccer Federation
1801 South Prairie Avenue**

Chicago, IL 60616

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I. OVERVIEW

The U.S. Soccer Development Academy (“**Development Academy**”) is an elite player and National Team development program and competition that is conducted and administered by the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (“**U.S. Soccer**” or “**USSF**”). The Development Academy program includes league and post-season competition, as well as other development-focused initiatives.

These Rules and Regulations, along with the Development Academy Membership Agreement, Development Academy Disciplinary Code, Development Academy Branding Guidelines, Development Academy Game Day Guide, the Development Academy Post-Season Guide, along with the U.S. Soccer Safe Soccer Framework, collectively form the “**Development Academy Requirements**” with which all clubs playing within the Development Academy must comply.

A. Safe Soccer Framework

U.S. Soccer is committed to making soccer the preeminent sport in the United States by serving athletes, our members, and their fans. U.S. Soccer’s Safe Soccer Framework, which incorporates policies mandated by federal law, the U.S. Olympic Committee (“**USOC**”) and the U.S. Center for SafeSport, represents a foundational structure for building a soccer community where all participants, be they athletes, coaches, referees, parents, administrators or volunteers, play an active role in creating a soccer atmosphere free of all forms of emotional, physical and sexual misconduct. The Safe Soccer Framework Handbook relies on the Amended SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements, (the “SafeSport Code,” effective April 15, 2019 and available on the Center’s web-site at: <https://www.safesport.org/policies-procedures>). The Safe Soccer Framework is incorporated into the Development Academy Requirements and can be found at www.ussoccerda.com or www.safesoccer.com.

All DA personnel are required to complete Core SafeSport training and yearly refreshers and acknowledge they have read and understand the Safe Soccer Framework prior to participating. Failure to comply will subject DA personnel and/or any athlete, referee or other participant to discipline.

Players age 18 years or older must complete the Core SafeSport Training and supply the certificate of completion. Any players who turn 18 during the 2019-20 season must also complete the Core SafeSport Training by their 18th birthday. Any players who complete the training prior to their 18th birthday must also provide a parental consent form to be completed by the players’ parent/guardian. Please contact DA Staff to obtain a consent form.

For the 2019-2020 season, U.S. Soccer will be introducing player-focused training. Clubs are advised to monitor communications from DA Staff for more information.

B. How to Report a Concerns; Your Obligation to Report Under Federal Law

U.S. Soccer supports a culture of compliance, safety and respect. As part of this Safe Soccer Framework, U.S. Soccer encourages open communication in which all participants feel comfortable reporting concerns, whether the concerns involve suspected abuse or any other misconduct. Participants are encouraged to raise concerns to coaches, referees, team administrators and U.S. Soccer staff.

DA Personnel are reminded of their obligation under the Federal *Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017* (the “SafeSport Act”) to report suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities ***within 24 hours*** of becoming aware of such information.

In addition, DA Personnel are required to promptly report to U.S. Soccer any matter reported to law enforcement and any other alleged violation of the Safe Soccer Framework. Failure to promptly report may lead to removal from the Development Academy.

We encourage you to report directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport at www.safesport.org or to the U.S. Soccer Integrity Hotline to report concerns to give us the opportunity to address concerns that may arise in the soccer landscape:

www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline

or by calling **(312) 528-7004**

The identity of any individual submitting a report in good faith will be handled discreetly and kept confidential to the fullest extent possible, unless doing so does not comply with applicable law or prevents a full and effective investigation of the report. To the greatest extent possible, personnel responsible for responding to such reports will maintain the confidentiality of the individual and the matters relating to the report.

Our Integrity Hotline Reporting Resource supports anonymous reporting. That said, we encourage you to include your information so that we may have the best opportunity to follow-up with you and ensure we have addressed the concern you have raised.

In the event U.S. Soccer receives a report to the Integrity Hotline that implicates a reporting obligation to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, we will make the report directly and/or work with you to make the report, as applicable. Your obligation to report to U.S. Soccer is separate from, and in addition to, your obligation under federal law.

U.S. Soccer does not tolerate retaliation of any kind. No individual who makes a good faith report will be subject to retaliation, including harassment, or any adverse employment or other applicable competitive consequence, as a result of making a report.

C. Youth Referee Safety

The abuse and assault of referees is expressly prohibited by U.S. Soccer Policy 531-9, but a particular note is required regarding referees who are also minors.

Youth Referees are trained game officials, and many are experienced players, but they are minor participants nonetheless and are therefore entitled to all of the protections extended to minor athletes by the Safe Soccer Framework.

Without limiting the foregoing, wherever a policy in the Safe Soccer Framework includes protections for minor athletes or other participants, they should also be read as protecting any referee under the age of 18.

In addition, DA Personnel are responsible for ensuring a safe, respectful and appropriate environment for DA matches, which includes setting a tone of respect and deference toward match officials of any age. The responsibility for protecting this environment—and youth referees—rests with **all** adult DA Personnel, including without limitation coaches on the field, trainers, and Academy Directors.

D. Important Dates for 2019-2020 Season

Please consult www.ussoccerda.com/events for an updated calendar of the current season's events.

II. ORGANIZATION

A. Development Academy Staff

The Development Academy Staff (the “**DA Central Staff**” or “**DA Staff**”) is appointed by the USSF CEO/Secretary General and consists of full- and part-time employees of USSF who are responsible for organization of the Development Academy, all administrative functions including amending these Regulations, the Disciplinary Code and any rules for the U.S. Soccer Development Academy, as well as enforcing the rules with suspensions, fines, and sanctions.

B. Technical Committee

The Technical Committee consists of the Club Development Directors, Development Academy Directors, and other U.S. Soccer staff. The Technical Committee will be responsible for providing all competition and training rules and procedures for the Development Academy.

C. Discipline Review Panel

An internal panel comprised of three representatives appointed by USSF CEO Secretary General that is charged with resolving incidents of alleged Academy infractions with authority to issue up to five-game suspensions. The Panel may refer to the Disciplinary Committee on any disciplinary matter implicating additional remedial action.

D. Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee shall be appointed by the USSF CEO/Secretary General on an ad hoc basis as requested by the Discipline Review Panel or DA central staff. For more information, please see the Development Academy Disciplinary Code.

E. Join the DA

Clubs interested in being considered for Development Academy membership should consult: <http://www.ussoccerda.com/overview-join-the-academy>.

F. Criteria for Selection

Clubs will be chosen based on the following criteria: (1) Player pool and market; (2) Player development effectiveness (YNT, NT, and pro player production); (3) Staff leadership, structure, and qualifications; (4) Talent Development Philosophy; (5) Training environment and personal development; (6) Facilities and infrastructure; (7) Staff and player respect; and (8) Resources, fees, scholarship, and financial assistance. The DA Staff 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. The DA Staff reserves the right to terminate any Club at any time for failure to maintain compliance with section criteria or repeated or material violations of these Rules & Regulations or the Safe Soccer Framework.

G. Maintaining Eligibility

To remain in good standing, Clubs must remain in substantial compliance with the Development Academy Requirements. In addition, the DA Staff or their designees reserve the right to conduct evaluations of all Academy Clubs. Such evaluations may include both technical and administrative criteria as well as compliance with these Rules and Regulations and the Safe Soccer Framework.

H. Withdrawal of a Club

In the event a DA team withdraws from the Development Academy without finishing its scheduled games, the DA Club shall forfeit its membership and performance bond, and the following will apply:

1. If at least half of the full schedule of games has been played, all resulting scores stand as validated by the DA Staff,
2. If less than one-half of the full schedule of games has been played, these completed games will be deleted from the standings; and
3. In the discretion of DA Staff, any remaining games shall either be recorded as a forfeit victory for the opponent and/or rescheduled, as appropriate.

I. Termination

The DA Staff reserves the right to terminate the membership of a DA Club at any time should it fail to adhere to the Development Academy Requirements, violate the Safe Soccer Framework, or otherwise act against the best interest of U.S. Soccer and/or the Development Academy.

III. CLUB NON-FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Compliance with Rules & Regulations

DA Clubs are required to comply with the Development Academy Requirements. The DA Staff reserves the right to decide how to enforce these Requirements. Should a DA Club be found in violation of any of the Requirements outlined in this document, their standing as a DA Club may be jeopardized. The penalties vary based on the type and frequency of the infraction and may result in denied participation in Academy-specific competitions and programming. In addition, the Development Academy Requirements are subject to change from time to time. Although the DA makes every effort not to modify the Development Academy Requirements mid-season, U.S. Soccer and the DA reserve the right to amend or enact new policies at any time, upon reasonable advance notice, particularly to the extent required by applicable law, USOC or U.S. Center for SafeSport mandate or otherwise where U.S. Soccer believes it is in the best interest of the Development Academy and/or the safety of its players.

B. Reporting Obligations

DA Clubs are encouraged to report pertinent situations to the DA Staff, which appear to be in non-compliance with the Academy Requirements. Reporting non-compliance on the part of other DA Clubs should not be viewed as a negative, but rather as a positive attempt to maintain consistent standards that ensure professionalism and fairness, both on and off the field. Regardless, failure to promptly report violations of the Safe Soccer Framework constitute a violation of the Development Academy Requirements as provided in Section I.B, above.

C. Conduct

Each DA Club must execute and deliver their Membership Agreement to the Academy office prior to the following season. Each DA Club shall be responsible for the conduct of its Academy Players, Academy Representatives, and members attending any Academy home fixture as related to all aspects of the Academy Program and agree to abide by the Safe Soccer Framework and the Code of Ethics for all Development Academy Coaches & Club Personnel.

D. Development

1. Training Days:

- a) Each DA team at the, U-14 through U-18/19 age groups is expected to hold at least four (4) training sessions per week while the team is competing during the Academy Season.
- b) Teams competing in the U-13 age group are required to train a minimum of three (3) times per week throughout the duration of the season.

2. Rest Days:

Each DA team at the U-13 through U-18/19 age groups is expected to provide at least one (1) day of rest per week during the Academy Season.

E. Permissible Outside Competition:

- 1. DA teams may participate in elite tournaments outside of the DA and international travel, in each case subject to approval by DA Central Staff (and in the event of international tournament participation, additional U.S. Soccer approvals may be required). DA teams will only be permitted to participate in approved competitions and events that follow the DA Technical Framework. Team participation in outside competition without prior approval may result in Academy Discipline.
- 2. To request permission, the team must submit a roster and all necessary background information to the DA Central Staff no later than ten (10) weeks before the event. In the incident the team plans to travel internationally, clubs must also submit the appropriate documentation to the U.S. Soccer Competitions Department. These documents can be found [here](#).

The Safe Soccer Framework and the prevention policies therein remain applicable to any team traveling internationally.

F. Player Participation in Outside Competitions

- 1. Academy Players must meet all attendance and participation requirements under the Development Academy Requirements and for the individual club requirements as well, for training and games for their DA team during the Academy Season. Failure to meet those requirements should result in removal from the DA team.

2. DA Clubs may not permit any full-time Academy Player to participate on a non-DA team during the Academy Season. The only permissible soccer related reasons to miss Development Academy activities is National Team duty and YNT Identification Center participation.
3. DA Clubs will be held accountable for the actions of their players.
4. Academy Players currently registered with a DA Club have committed to forgo participating in both the Academy and high school or middle school soccer.
 - a) Players who participate in high/middle school soccer are ineligible to participate in Academy practice and competition during that same season.
 - b) Only players who have been granted a waiver by the League Office will be allowed to remain on their club's Academy roster during the *high school* soccer season (waivers are not available for middle school). This waiver must be received by the DA office before September 9, 2019, to be considered for the roster exemption. The waiver eligibility guidelines are as follows:
 - (1) Players who receive consideration or financial aid to attend a private high school based on their participation with the soccer team are eligible
 - (2) Although clubs are not limited to a specific number of waivers, the number is naturally self-limiting to field a full team throughout the Academy season.
 - (3) Full-time players registered with a DA Club will not be allowed to re-enter the program during the same season after participating in the high school season with their current or a different DA Club.
 - c) The [waiver](#) must be completed and includes the following:
 - (1) Signed by the Principal, Head Master or similar position
 - (2) Player name, club and high school participation information
 - (3) States the player is expected to participate in high school soccer as part of their enrollment at this school and subsidized education
 - (4) States the term, semester and/or dates in which the player will be participating in high school soccer
 - (5) Signed and dated by the Academy Director and Parent/Guardian of the player
 - (6) Sent to Academy Office for approval prior to September 9, 2019
5. **College Camp Policy.** Academy players will be permitted to attend winter college camps provided the Academy Coach has approved attendance. The following guidelines are in place for college camps:

- a) The camp may be no longer than three days in length;
- b) The player may only attend one camp per school per year;
- c) The player may not attend a camp if it falls during the competitive season or is equal to or less than one week prior to the start of the competitive DA season; and
- d) College summer camps that fall outside of the DA season do not apply and players may attend such camps without needing to request a waiver.

G. Training and Game Expectations

All DA teams are required to complete their entire regular season Academy schedule, as well as required to attend all Academy events scheduled for their age group. Failure to field a team for a scheduled Academy game resulting in a forfeit will cause the club to surrender their performance bond (\$5000) and submit a new bond (\$5000) before the next scheduled fixture. All forfeits are subject to additional fines and disciplinary action. Any club forfeiting more than one game during their membership in the Academy may be removed from the program.

DA Clubs are responsible for adhering to all game day policies and procedures outlined and explained in the Academy Game Day Guide. DA Clubs should make efforts to acquire the best facilities possible. DA Clubs must train and play home Academy league games within reasonable geographic proximity to their club's home location unless approved by the DA Staff. If a club is unable to provide a home field that meets Academy minimum standards, the club may be asked to locate an alternate location or may lose the right to host Academy games.

H. Academy Meeting Attendance

The DA Club must send at least one (1) Academy Director and one (1) administrator to each Academy meeting or conference call as scheduled by U.S. Soccer and the Academy program unless otherwise notified.

I. Recommended Field and Goal Frame Dimensions

The following provides recommended Field and Goal frame dimensions. Please see Section XII.B for requirements regarding goal anchoring and inspections.

Fields should be 70-80 yards in width and 110-120 yards in length. The goal frame size is 24 feet wide and 8 feet in height. It is common and age-appropriate for U-13 and U-14 to play on fields featuring the smallest of the recommended dimensions, with the flexibility to play on smaller fields if needed (e.g. 65x100 yards).

J. Recruiting Players/Territories

Subject to the rules limiting transfers between DA teams in Section VIII.C, below, *no DA Club has exclusive territory rights*. The DA Clubs may recruit players for participation on DA teams from any geographic region. Clubs should note that coaches and administrators may be subject to the rules of other USSF Organization Members when they are recruiting for the club's non-DA teams. However, those rules do not apply to players recruited to play full-time on Development DA teams. Clubs are expected to contact the player's current Academy Director prior to contacting the player and request permission to speak with the player or invite the player to any club meeting or training session

IV. CLUB FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Performance Bond

Each DA Club will be required to post a performance bond of \$5,000 at the beginning of its Academy Membership. The performance bond may be returned with the change in an DA Club's status with approval of the DA Staff.

B. Travel Costs

All costs associated with the travel to Academy Competitions (other than the Academy Knockout Round and Championships) are the responsibility of the individual DA Clubs. Anthony Travel is the official provider of travel and hotel bookings for U.S. Soccer and is the official hotel provider for all Development Academy events; Clubs are required to book event lodging through Anthony Travel. The best phone number to reach Anthony Travel is 800-736-6377 and the best email is soccer@anthonytravel.com.

C. Training/Coaching Costs

All costs associated with the training and coaching of a DA team are the responsibility of the individual DA Clubs.

D. Administrative Costs

All costs associated with running a DA team, including without limitation all insurance premiums and deductibles, are the responsibility of the individual DA 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 for all players is \$50 per player, and all staff registration is \$50 per staff member. Coaches/Club Staff do not need to pay more if coaching across different age groups or serving in multiple roles. Fees are subject to change.

F. Equipment Costs

Unless provided by the DA Staff, all costs associated with equipment are the responsibility of the individual DA Clubs.

G. Facility Costs

All costs associated with securing a Facility for training and games are the responsibility of the individual DA Clubs. The host club is responsible for covering facility parking fees (if applicable) for the game officials, visiting club staff and team transportation (i.e. bus/van).

H. Referee Fees

U.S. Soccer will cover referee fees for all age groups in official Development Academy competitions.

I. Fines/Penalties

The DA Staff reserves the right to assess fines for violations of the Development Academy Requirements. All of the money collected in fines will be reinvested into the Academy program.

J. Other

Unless otherwise indicated in these regulations, all expenses related to a DA team are the responsibility of the participating DA Club.

V. FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DA STAFF/ADMINISTRATION

A. Development Academy Championships:

U.S. Soccer will provide a stipend to cover costs on airfare, hotel, meals and ground transportation for up to 23 (18 players and 5 coaches/administrators) people from each of the DA teams that qualify for the annual Academy Championships.

B. Referees

U.S. Soccer covers the referee fees for all age groups in official Development Academy competitions.

C. Player and Academy Coach Medical Insurance:

U.S. Soccer provides *secondary* medical insurance for each registered Academy Player. This medical insurance is secondary to other policies and covers only those activities related to the U.S. Soccer Development Academy. Additional Information can be found in Section XIV.

VI. REGISTRATION

A. Minimum Registration Requirements

DA Staff shall have the authority to establish additional procedures, including deadlines, for registration of players. For the 2019-20 season, all registration will be completed online through U.S. Soccer Connect.

1. Player Online Registration Required Fields:

- First Name, Last Name
- Parent and/or Legal Guardian Emergency Contact Information
- Email address
- Home address
- Citizenship and Nationality fields
- ITC Questionnaire

All other information is voluntary and may be entered or edited at any time. Should any player

raise concerns regarding any requested information field (e.g., citizenship), the Team Administrator is asked to contact the DA Staff.

2. In addition to the Player online registration, the Academy Administrator must submit copies of the following for players on an DA team to U.S. Soccer Connect:

- Proof of age for a player in the form of a passport or birth certificate;
- Signed 2019-20 waivers for each Academy player;
- Proof of registration with the DA Club if the player is a Part-Time Player;
- Registration fee;
- Foreign players must complete the clearance process outlined in section VI. B. 1 of the U.S. Soccer Federation Bylaws and Policies;
- Completion of IMPACT Baseline Test;
- Photo of the player for scouting and player identification
- Medical Insurance Information

B. Club Staff Registration Prerequisites

In order to be an eligible Coach, Staff member or registered Health Care Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), all club representatives seeking to work with any DA athlete, practice, game or other event must be fully registered, and approved. Names and photos are created digitally through the Academy registration software and will be used to check in players and Coaches / Staff who will be in the club's technical area via the Game Day Roster. A maximum of five (5 Coaches / Staff Members (not including HCP/ATC) from a club may be in the technical area during a game and all must have a photo within the Game Day Roster.

To request approval, all club staff members and trainers must complete the online registration process through U.S. Soccer Connect by:

- paying a fifty-dollar (\$50) registration fee;
- completing the U.S. Soccer-mandated background check;
- completing the U.S. Center for SafeSport Core Training¹ (for initial approval) or the official SafeSport refresher course for each subsequent season (available in your training account at www.safesport.org); and
- submitting a signed Development Academy Agreement and Waiver for the

¹ Pursuant to the Safe Soccer Framework, U.S. Soccer will make its SafeSport training code available for the use of any U.S. Soccer Local Affiliated Organization (including all clubs with which DA teams are affiliated), upon request and at no additional cost. Contact DA Staff for more details.

applicable season.

- **NOTE: individuals subject to disciplinary action, whether temporary or final measure, by the U.S. Center for SafeSport or U.S. Soccer will not be permitted to participate in the Development Academy. Clubs are advised to consult the on-line disciplinary records at www.safesport.org as part of their employment background screening process.**
- Any DA team allowing unapproved personnel to participate, risk termination of their Development Academy Membership and will hold U.S. Soccer and all other DA teams harmless from any resulting liability.

C. **Additional Coach and Academy Director requirements.**

- All Boys' DA Coaches are required to adhere to the Development Academy's Coaching Education standards and hold a minimum 'USSF B' license.
- Effective with the 2021-2022 season, Girls' DA Coaches are required to adhere to the Development Academy's Coaching Education standards and hold a minimum 'USSF B' license.
- All Academy Directors must hold a minimum 'USSF A' license.
- Coaches (Head or Assistant), Academy Directors or other Academy Representatives will also need to submit their coaching biographies in U.S. Soccer Connect once eligible for the Development Academy season.

D. **Coach Apprentice Program**

The Coach Apprentice Program is designed to provide a pathway for coaches who currently hold a USSF D License or above and who are working towards a USSF B License to be approved as apprentice coaches in the Development Academy. For more information on the Coach Apprentice Program, please click [here](#).

VII. **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DA PERSONNEL**

This Code is intended to provide standards of conduct for all Development Academy coaches and team personnel. Violation of the Code may impact eligibility to participate in the Academy program.

A. **General Principles**

1. **Competence:** Coaches and Academy personnel shall maintain high standards of work, recognize boundaries, competencies and limitations of expertise and provide services for which they are qualified.
2. **Integrity:** Coaches and Academy personnel shall promote integrity in the practice of coaching and Academy administration through honesty and respect. Coaches and personnel should function appropriately in accordance with roles within the Academy program and avoid improper and harmful relationships.

3. **Professional Responsibility:** Coaches and Academy personnel shall uphold the standards of conduct, be clear on professional roles and obligations, conduct themselves appropriately and adapt methods to the need of different athletes. Coaches and personnel consult with, refer to and cooperate with other coaches and personnel within the Academy to best serve the interests of athletes and the Academy program. All involved in the Academy program shall avoid unethical conduct within their team, but also with others in the program.
4. **Respect for Participants:** Coaches and personnel shall respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants. All are aware of cultural, individual and role differences; including, but not limited to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socioeconomic status. Coaches and Academy personnel should try to eliminate the effect of biases, based on those factors, on their work and not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.
5. **Responsible Coaching:** Coaches and Academy personnel are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community and the society in which their work and live. All should avoid misuse of their work and comply with the law in all matters.

B. Code of Conduct

All coaches, trainers, administrators and other DA personnel should be sensitive to their position as role models to DA athletes.

1. Respecting Others

- a) Coaches and Academy personnel understand and comply with the Safe Soccer Framework at all times, refraining from any Prohibited Conduct and ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all athletes
- b) Coaches and Academy personnel respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes and opinions that differ from their own.
- c) Coaches and Academy personnel refrain from undertaking any activities when they know or should know that their personal problems are likely to lead to harm to athletes or others whom they owe a professional obligation. Coaches shall take appropriate steps if or when a personal problem does arise that interferes with their ability to maintain their professional capacity.
- d) Without limiting the applicability of the Safe Soccer Framework, Coaches and Academy personnel do not exploit or engage in any sexual/romantic relationships with athletes or other participants over whom they have supervisory, evaluative or other authority.

2. Professionalism

- a) Coaches shall provide services within boundaries of competence. New techniques shall only be implemented after training in such areas. Coaches shall take reasonable steps in emerging areas in which generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist.

- b) Coaches shall maintain the Academy standards for professional standards.
- c) When engaged in coaching, coaches shall present information accurately and with a reasonable degree of objectivity. Coaches also shall recognize the power they hold over athletes and therefore make reasonable efforts to avoid engaging in demeaning conduct.
- d) Coaches establish an appropriate process for providing feedback to athletes. Such evaluation shall be on the basis of actual performance on relevant and established program requirements.
- e) Coaches perform evaluations or team selection only within the context of a defined professional relationship. The assessment, recommendation reports or evaluative statements used to select team members shall be based on information and techniques sufficient to provide appropriate substantiation for their findings.
- f) Because professional judgments and actions may affect the lives of others, coaches and Academy personnel must refrain from personal, professional, financial, social organizational or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence.
- g) Coaches and Academy personnel must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. A person in this role refrains from entering into or promising another personal, professional, financial or other relationship with such persons if it appears likely that such a relationship might impair the objectivity or otherwise interfere with the person's role and function.
- h) Coaches and Academy personnel delegate duties and responsibilities only to those that can reasonably be expected to perform competently.

3. Communications

- a) Coaches and Academy personnel agree to communicate with all athletes, parents and other stakeholders
- b) Coaches and Academy personnel agree to specify financial and billing arrangements as early as possible in the professional relationship; will not exploit recipients of services; consistent with the law; do not misrepresent fees.
- c) Coaches and Academy personnel do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, fraudulent or that otherwise violate this code of conduct.
- d) Coaches and Academy personnel do not engage, directly or through others, in uninvited in-person solicitation of business from actual or potential athletes or other participants.
- e) Coaches and Academy personnel are forthcoming with the format, structure and cost of training. Each training session will be supervised with a coach, and if they will not attend, a coach of similar capabilities will be in attendance. Programs will make

reasonable efforts to communicate and avoid apparent misunderstandings about training.

4. Drugs-Free Sport

Coaches and Academy personnel do not tolerate the use of performance-enhancing drugs, illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco. The program supports athletes' efforts to be drug-free and avoid participation in illegal activities.

VIII. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY AND ROSTERING

A. Eligible Players

1. Players listed on any DA team Roster must meet the age requirement for their DA team, have paid the registration fee and:
 - a) Supply proof of their age and identity to the DA Staff in the form of a birth certificate or passport;
 - b) Supply a waiver & indemnification form executed by both the player and a custodial parent/guardian;
 - c) Complete an IMPACT Baseline Test, and
 - d) Be properly registered and not be subject to suspension.
 - (1) Serving a Suspension: To serve a suspension a player is required to sit for the entire subsequent match day. The player is not eligible to play with an older age group on the day the player serves the suspension.
 - e) Players age 18 years or older must complete the Core SafeSport Training and supply the certificate of completion. Any players who turn 18 during the 2019-20 season must also complete the Core SafeSport Training by their 18th birthday. Any players who complete the training prior to their 18th birthday must also provide a parental consent form to be completed by the players' parent/guardian. Please contact DA Staff to obtain a consent form.

Players can only be approved and made eligible by DA Staff.

2. Players not listed on the Roster or any player listed on the Roster but not eligible to play, due to reasons such as missing Academy registration forms, awaiting international clearance, serving a league suspension or not being listed on the official game day roster and line-up sheet shall be considered an ineligible player. Any DA Club using an ineligible player during an Academy competition may be subject to a fine as determined by the DA Staff and/or a forfeit (by a 0-3 margin) of any DA Games in which the illegal player participated.
3. Each participating DA Club shall ensure the following when selecting its DA team for each age group in a 2019-20 Academy Competition:

- a) all players remain subject to the Development Academy and U.S. Soccer jurisdiction;
- b) all players shall be eligible for participation in accordance with the relevant Development Academy and FIFA regulations;
- c) all players shall meet the applicable age requirements:

Age Group	Born on or After
U-13	January 1, 2007
U-14	January 1, 2006
U-15	January 1, 2005
U-16	January 1, 2004
U-16/17	January 1, 2003
U-17	January 1, 2003
U-18/19	January 1, 2000

4. Players that have participated or are participating in any college program at any level (Division I, Junior College, etc.) are not permitted to participate in the Academy unless they meet one or more of the following requirements:

- A DA age-eligible player that is under a professional contract with the Academy’s professional club or such professional club’s official affiliate.
- A college player that is no longer participating in their college program and remains age eligible and is able to commit full-time to all Academy training.
- College players that are either enrolled and not actively rostered; or players that have been enrolled in University and withdrawn; that prefer to use the Development Academy full time as the avenue to further their development. All clubs must submit an “Academy Reinstatement” form as part of the approval process. The form can be found on the Resources page at www.ussoccerda.com.
- A DA player participated regularly as a Full-Time player in the fall season with the DA club and subsequently left the DA environment for the spring college season, their reinstatement to the DA will be permitted for the duration of the 2019-20 season after their spring college season concludes.

B. Academy Roster

1. **General:** Each roster shall be published on www.ussoccerda.com and shall be considered the official roster of the DA Club.

- a) The date by which each Club must provide an initial Academy roster for the 2019-20 season is August 5, 2019.
 - b) Each Club's roster may average no more than 24 players across each age group based on the minimum of 14 Full-Time players and a maximum of 10 Part-Time players
 - c) Roster Maximums can vary from one age group to another so long as the FT Minimum and PT Maximum limits for number of teams are followed
 - d) There is no limit to the number of rostered players that do not have United States citizenship for either gender.
2. **Full-Time Player Adds:** Clubs will have one period during the season at which time players may be added as full-time (either adding a new full-time player, a player transfer from one DA Club to another, or moving a part-time player to full-time status).
- a) Boys' U-13 & U-14 teams will have twelve (12) combined player adds to utilize during this window. Boys' U-15 teams will have six (6) player adds to utilize during this window. Boys' U-16/17 and U-18/19 teams will have twelve (12) combined player adds to utilize during this window.
 - b) Girls' U-14 & U-15 teams will have twelve (12) combined player adds to utilize during this window. Girls' U-16 & U-17 teams will have twelve (12) combined player adds to utilize during this window. Girls' U-18/19 teams will have six (6) adds to utilize during this window.
 - c) Clubs that pass a registered player onto a club with a professional pathway will not be charged with using a player add to replace that individual.
 - d) Any unused player adds cannot be utilized beyond the deadline unless a club is promoting a Part-Time Player (added before the deadline) to full-time after the add window and has an open roster slot.
3. **Injured Players:** If a club is operating at the roster maximum, they may request to replace a player with a serious injury (as supported by written documentation from a medical professional detailing the injury) with a new player in their roster spot. If the injured player is medically cleared to return during the season, he/she can replace the player that took his/her roster spot with no deduction of roster adds.
4. **Full-Time Player Add Window:** Sept. 9, 2019 - April 3, 2020

C. Player Transfers / Releases

- 1. Transfer of a player from one DA team to another shall be treated like any other adds.
- 2. Players are free to transfer between DA Clubs during off seasons, subject only to meeting a given Club's registration deadlines/eligibility requirements.
- 3. Transfers during a season must be sent to DA Staff and the staff shall review and have the authority to approve or deny a transfer of a player in all circumstances. In general, a

player who wishes to transfer to a new DA team during the season is required to obtain a release from their original DA Club in writing before transferring or communicating with another club.

- a) In all other circumstances, the DA Club has the discretion to transfer / release or not transfer / release the player during the Academy Season.
 - b) Prior to approval by DA Staff of a transfer request, players may not train or otherwise participate with a DA team with which they are not officially rostered.
 - c) If a player trains with another DA team prior to receiving a release, they may not be permitted to transfer to that DA Club.
4. Clubs wishing to speak to a player registered with another DA Club must state their intentions in writing to the player's original/current club, the DA Staff.
 5. Regardless of the scenario, any transfer player will sit all head-to-head regular season fixtures between former and new club, regardless of being released by their previous club (this does not apply to preseason or postseason). If there are no head-to-head fixtures that remain in the current season, the player will be eligible to participate, pending service of any other suspensions.

D. Part-Time Players

Clubs may add up to an average of 10 Part-Time (PT) Players, averaged across all club's age groups (U-13 through U-18/19), which will count against roster totals, according to the Part Time Player Policy. The 2019-2020 policy is available at http://www.ussoccerda.com/administrative_resources.

A Part-time Player (PT) is a player who is rostered with a DA Club or their affiliate Club that is not ready to contribute at the Academy level full time. This player is not playing consistently and/or enough minutes in DA games to fully develop; therefore, the player is eligible to play games outside of the DA program. The PT player consistently trains 3-4 times a week (depending on their age group) and must train with both teams every week. The PT player is required to train a minimum of 1x every week with the DA team, in addition to their non-DA team. For example, the player trains 1-2x every week with the DA team and 1-2x every week with the non-DA team.

PT players can play in a maximum of 12 DA games. Note, at U-13 and U-14 age groups, any PT player added to the game day roster will count as a game played. To supplement their Academy game minutes, the PT player is eligible to also play games outside the DA on a non-DA team within the club or in an affiliate club as part of his/her individual development plan. PT players must still follow the Academy play-to-rest ratio.

PT players may not be registered PT with any two different Academy clubs at the same time during the same Academy season (Sept-July). PT players may only change their status to full-time once during the Academy season and they may not return to PT player status. Furthermore, a PT player does not automatically garner full-time status after participating in their twelfth game. The club must submit their intentions in writing to the Academy Office to move the player to full-time status. Players that have played in the maximum twelve (12) games, are not eligible to continue to play in Academy games, unless the club indicates the desire to move the player to full-time status and the player status has been updated to full-time by the Academy Central

Office. Note, continued usage of a PT player after their 12th game could cause a club to forfeit games due to the use of an ineligible player. Additionally, PT players are eligible to participate in the Academy Playoffs or Academy Championships.

E. Club Affiliations

An affiliation is a collaboration based on a partnership between two Clubs and confirmed in a written document that is signed by the Academy Directors and approved by the board of directors of each club. The active partnerships are focused primarily on technical standards (not simply commercial/marketing) and should result in improved everyday environments for all clubs involved.

Qualities of recognized Club Affiliations may include:

- An active “relationship/partnership” is expected with regular contact (min. 5x per year) between the coaching staff of both Clubs (and/or talent identification centers)
- Club/coach development is part of the active “relationship” with the Clubs (and/or talent identification centers)

Recognition by the Development Academy: A contract/agreement must be signed by the DA Club’s Academy Director and by the affiliate Club representative, with board approval. The signed contract/agreement document must have a clear explanation of the “relationship” between the clubs, e.g. collaboration on talent identification activities to create a clear player pathway. The signed document is then submitted to Academy staff for approval of recognition.

F. Younger Players Playing Up

Players on the U-13, U-14, U-15, and U-16/17 DA teams may be selected for the U-14, U-15, U-16/17 and U-18/19 game day roster. The 25% start recommendation is inclusive of all games started in any Academy age group. Players playing up can only compete in one (1) game per day and are subject to the split fixture provision (see [Game Day Guide](#)).

G. Late Registration

Any registration requests received **after Thursday at 5:00pm Central Time for the upcoming weekend** fixtures and any midweek games for the following week may not be approved in time for the upcoming fixture.

H. Game Roster Size

For U-13 through U-18/19 games, only 18 players from the roster will be eligible to participate in each game, and these players must be placed on the Game Day Roster (showing players that will start and players eligible for substitution).

I. Bench and Technical Area

The bench and technical area are reserved for players listed on the Team’s Game Day Roster (max 18 players-7 subs on bench), in addition a maximum of four (4) injured players marked as not rostered, may sit in the technical area and a maximum of five (5) registered club staff members, not including a registered HCP or ATC.

J. Game Day Rosters

Each team must create and submit an official Game Day Roster to the referee prior to the game. Each roster must include all team staff. DA teams are responsible for verifying the accuracy of Game Day Rosters and signing a completed copy from the referee crew after the game. The DA Staff will update the Academy rosters weekly on the Academy registration website to reflect any suspensions, additions or drops, or other eligibility issues.

K. International Clearance

Per FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, the international clearance process is required when any foreign-born player over the age of 10 attempts to register with an affiliated club in the United States, regardless of that player's ability or citizenship.²

FIFA's regulations require U.S. Soccer to obtain appropriate clearances on behalf of these players before they can register and participate in an affiliated league. Additional information can be found [here](#).

L. 25% Minimum Start Recommendation

All U-13 through U-18/19 full-time Academy players, including goalkeepers, are *recommended* but not required to start in at least 25% of their club's Academy games during the season. The official record of player starts will be on the game report and player statistics available publicly online. The DA Club is responsible for keeping track of starts by Academy players and must notify the DA Staff about potential exceptions as soon as possible.

1. If a player is released by the club and the player failed to start 25% of the Academy games for the season, the club must submit a written explanation to DA Staff within ten (10) days of the player's release. The DA Staff reserves the right to refuse to release the player if the release is to avoid the 25% start recommendations.
2. If a player is added midseason, the player should start at least 25% of the team's remaining Academy games during the season.
3. The DA Staff will have the authority, upon request by the club, to allow exceptions to this recommendation in special circumstances (*e.g.* a serious injury suffered by a player).
4. **Suggested Playing Time Recommendations for U-13:** For the U-13 age group, players are expected to play a minimum of 50% of game minutes per month and recommended to start 25% of games, as part of the individual player development plan.
5. U.S. Soccer reserves the right to fine a club or disallow the addition of new players as a penalty for failing to make reasonable efforts for all players meet the 25% minimum start

² According to FIFA, these Regulations serve an important function in protecting minors: "Young footballers are vulnerable to potential exploitation and abuse when they are in a foreign country without proper controls. While international transfers might, in specific cases, be favourable to a young player's sporting career, they are likely to be contrary to the best interests of the vast majority of players as minors. For FIFA, protecting the appropriate and stable development of a minor as a whole should prevail over purely sporting interests. In the past, the trafficking of young players to clubs, mainly in Europe, by unscrupulous persons led to some minors, whose talent may not have met the expectations of the respective clubs, being virtually abandoned on the streets in foreign countries. In these cases, minor players often do not know the language or culture and have no means to return to their home countries. It is also necessary to mention that, in some cases, what is questioned is not necessarily the quality of the training and overall education provided to the minors by this or that club, but the methods used to bring the minors into the club. Today, although FIFA's approach may appear harsh in an individual case, it is only by enforcing the rules consistently and strictly that the abuses of the past can be avoided, and a proper and safe development of minor players secured."

recommendation. The DA will also take this into consideration when reviewing a club's membership for renewal.

IX. COMPETITION

A. Overview

The DA Staff will place DA Clubs into geographically based divisions and conferences and set a schedule. The DA Staff reserves the right to adjust game scheduling.

B. Schedule

The DA Staff will provide a preliminary schedule for the Academy League by July 1 preceding each season. The season will be held from August until mid-July each year (inclusive of post-season). The U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs and Academy Championships will be held each year in June and July. If a DA team would like to change a fixture date, it must contact the DA Staff four (4) weeks in advance of the fixture date. All changes are subject to the approval of the DA Staff.

C. Venue/Kick-off Times/Turnaround Time

The DA Staff shall set the dates of all Academy competitions. The venues and specific kick-off times of the Academy games shall be proposed by the home team, subject to the approval of the DA Staff. The home team shall submit venues and specific kick-off times to the DA Staff for all Academy games by August 12, 2019 so visiting teams can make the appropriate arrangements or offer objections for the DA Staff's consideration. All clubs must provide a turf or synthetic alternative in the event of inclement weather. Evening games may only be played at venues with appropriate lighting installations.

1. Double fixture weekends may be played; however, ***a minimum of eighteen hours*** must be provided between both kick-off times to allow for necessary travel and recovery.
 - a) For instance, if a Saturday fixture kick-off is 6 pm local time, the Sunday fixture may not kick-off earlier than 12 pm local time unless permitted by DA Staff.
2. Clubs may not request to schedule three (3) games in four (4) days during regular season competition.
3. Games may not kick-off earlier than 9 am local time.
4. When scheduling home Development Academy games—kick off times and order of games—please use to the following guidelines:
 - a) The Home team determines kickoff order
 - b) The Academy prefers games to be played youngest to oldest when possible
 - c) When scheduling multiple games on the same field, please allow for at least 30 minutes of warm up time prior to each kickoff
 - d) Less than 30 minutes between each game is permitted if there is adequate warm up

space on an adjacent field

5. Indoor venues must be pre-approved by DA Staff *at least two weeks prior* to the fixture date.
6. Moving a fixture venue or kick-off time for any reason the week of the scheduled fixture may result in a club fee of \$50 for each occurrence.

D. Facility Set-Up

The Home team shall be responsible for setting up its venue to include the appropriate lines, goals, nets, corner flags, benches, and water/POWERADE sideline set up for both teams. The Home team will also provide the official Nike game balls provided by the Academy.

E. Postponement

All postponements and cancellations must be approved by DA Staff. In no case may a DA Club postpone or cancel a game without approval of DA Staff.

F. Rescheduling a Postponed Game

Provided the postponement is approved by DA Staff, the clubs in question are given the first opportunity to arrange a reschedule date for a postponed game. If there is no rescheduled date by the following Wednesday after the postponed fixture, DA Staff will choose the date, location and time for the reschedule and each club will be required to participate. Fees associated with that date will be the responsibility of the club(s) as determined by DA Staff.

G. Rescheduling Considerations

U-13 games must reach the 55th minute to be considered a completed game. U-14 and U-15 games must reach the 60th minute of the game to be considered a completed game. U-16/17 and U-18/19 games must reach the 75th minute to be considered a completed game. If a game does not reach the designated threshold, the DA Staff shall have the authority to review all of 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. Unless the sanction or remedy is set forth specifically in any U.S. Soccer Development Academy Requirements, the DA Staff shall decide what action to take, and the DA Staff's decision shall be final.

H. Facility Clearances

Once a DA team has submitted its venues and kick-off times, the DA Staff assumes that a team's home facility is available for all dates on its schedule. If not available, an alternative location must be provided. For the avoidance of doubt, all facilities remain subject to approval by DA Staff. The Academy reserves the right to reject approval for any facilities in the DA Staff's sole and reasonable discretion.

I. Standings

The DA Staff assumes the responsibility of posting the official Academy League standings for the U-15

through U-18/19 age groups at www.ussoccerda.com. The Development Academy does not keep standings for the U-13 and U-14 age groups. Official Academy League standings include wins, losses, ties, goals scored for, goals scored against, points per game and total league points.

<u>Result</u>	<u>Points</u>
Win	3
Tie	1
Loss	0
Forfeit	0-3 loss

All standings are generated by the game report submitted online by the Referee within 24 hours of the completion of the game. Teams have 48 hours to verify their game results with the DA Staff.

J. Division Tiebreakers

1. The ranking of each team in the Division will be determined as follows:
 - a) greatest points per game obtained in all Academy games;
 - b) greatest goal difference per game in all Academy games;
 - c) greatest number of goals scored per game in all Academy games.
2. If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, rankings will be determined as follows:
 - a) greatest points per game obtained in all Division games between the teams concerned;
 - b) greatest goal difference per game in all Division games between the teams concerned;
 - c) greatest number of goals scored per game in all Division games between the teams concerned;
 - d) team with the fewest number of Discipline Points per game throughout the 2019-20 season (regular season and playoffs) will advance;
 - (1) 1 point for YC, 5 points for RC, and 10 points for coach send-off/dismissals
 - e) drawing of lots by the DA Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

K. Wildcard Tiebreakers

1. The ranking of each team in the Wildcard will be determined as follows:
 - a) greatest points per game obtained in all Academy games;
 - b) greatest goal difference per game in all Academy games;

- c) greatest number of goals scored per game in all Academy games.
2. If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, rankings will be determined as follows:
- a) greatest number of points obtained in the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
 - b) goal difference resulting from the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
 - c) greater number of goals scored in the Academy games between the teams concerned if only two teams are still equal;
 - d) team with the fewest number of Discipline Points per game throughout the 2019-20 season (regular season and playoffs) will advance;
 - (1) 1 point for YC, 5 points for RC, and 10 points for coach send-off/dismissals
 - e) drawing of lots by the DA Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

L. Playoffs Tiebreakers

1. The ranking of each team in the Playoffs will be determined as follows:
- a) greatest number of points obtained in all Playoff games;
 - b) greatest goal difference in all Playoff games;
 - c) greatest number of goals scored in all Playoff games.
2. If two or more teams are equal on the basis of the above three criteria, their rankings will be determined as follows:
- a) greatest number of points obtained in the Playoff games between the teams concerned;
 - b) greatest goal difference resulting from the Playoff games between the teams concerned;
 - c) greater number of goals scored in the Playoff games between the teams concerned;
 - d) team with the fewest number of Discipline Points per game throughout the 2019-20 season (regular season and playoffs) will advance;
 - (1) 1 point for YC, 5 points for RC, and 10 points for coach send-off/dismissals
 - e) drawing of lots by the DA Staff if three or more teams are still equal.

M. Technical Framework

1. **Game Length:**

- a) All U-16 through U-18/19 games will be two 45-minute halves with a 15- minute half time.
- b) All U-14 and U-15 games will be two 40-minute halves with 15-minute half time.
- c) All U-13 games will be two 35-minute halves with a ten-minute half time.

2. **Substitutions:** Substitutions are allowed at any stoppage. Games shall follow the Technical Framework provided for at the beginning of each Academy season in the Game Day Guide. The maximum limits for substitutions are:

- a) For Boys U-16/17 and U-18/19 Academy games there will be a maximum of five (5) substitutions per game with no re-entry across three “moments”.
- b) For Boys U-15 Academy games and Girls U-15 through U-18/19 Academy games, there will a maximum of be seven (7) substitutions per game with no re-entry across three “moments”.
- c) U-13 and U-14 Academy games will have unlimited substitutions with re-entry across three “moments”.

3. **Head Injury Substitution:** Effective January 1, 2016, the Academy has implemented a rule change to allow a player who is suspected to have suffered a head injury to be substituted while being evaluated. The substitution for the evaluation of the concussion/head injury **will not count** against the team’s total number of allowed substitutions/substitution moments in the Academy game. However, a team must be in possession of at least one (1) substitution and one (1) substitution moment to implement this temporary substitution.

- a) If the player is deemed by the HCP or ATC to not have suffered a concussion, the player may re-enter the game at any stoppage of play and must replace the original substitute; this head injury evaluation substitution will not count as a used substitution or substitution moment. Furthermore, the temporary substitute will be able to re-enter the game at a later time.
- b) If the player is not cleared to return to play by the HCP or ATC, the replacement player will no longer be considered a temporary substitution and the team will be charged a substitution and substitution moment.
- c) Any discipline issued to the temporary substitute will count for the remainder of the game.
- d) Further information about this substitution addendum can be found [here](#).

N. Heading Education

According to U.S. Soccer policy, players age 11 and younger should not be heading the ball regardless of the age group in which they play. If a player is playing up in an older age group (ex: 11-year-old playing with a U-13 team), DA teams are nonetheless responsible for providing coach education and support to parents to ensure appropriate instruction to the player in accordance with this policy.

Please consult www.recognizetorecover.org for the most up-to-date U.S. Soccer safety programs and concussion management protocols.

X. DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY POST-SEASON COMPETITION

For information regarding the Development Academy post-season, please refer to the Development Academy Post-Season Guide.

XI. LAWS OF THE GAME, DISCIPLINARY MATTERS, DISPUTES, PROTESTS & APPEALS

A. Laws of the Game

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.

B. Disciplinary Matters

Disciplinary incidents are handled 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, and all Development Academy Requirements. The Academy Players, Academy Coaches, Academy Representatives and DA Clubs agree to comply with all further directives regarding the U.S. Soccer Development Academy from time to time, including without limitation any health and safety requirements or protocols.

C. Protests of Officiating Decisions

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 Game Decision (as defined below) is subject to protest, it shall be submitted to the jurisdiction of the DA Central Staff.

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, excluding disciplinary matters, including but not limited to, the eligibility of players, the state of the field, accessory game equipment, crowd behavior and stadium installations (“**Game Decisions**”).
2. **Time:** Unless otherwise stipulated in this article, protests shall be submitted in writing to the DA 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 DA Staff; otherwise they will be disregarded.

3. **Eligibility:** Protests regarding the eligibility of players for games shall be submitted in writing to the DA 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 Administrator lodging the protest. DA Staff must also be notified of the protest prior to kick-off. If the field's playing surface becomes unplayable during a game, the Referee shall consult DA Staff and both parties shall have the joint right to determine whether to delay, postpone or cancel the game.
5. **After a Game:** Protests against any incidents that occur during the course of a game shall be made to the DA Office immediately following the completion of the game.
6. **Referee's Decisions:** No protests may be made about the Referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play; such decisions are final.
7. **Frivolous Protests:** If an unfounded or irresponsible protest is lodged, the DA Staff may dismiss the protest.
8. For the avoidance of doubt, all violations of Development Academy Requirements other than Game Decisions remain subject to the DA Disciplinary Code found at www.ussoccerda.com.

D. Match Integrity Policy

U.S. Soccer prohibits match manipulation of any kind. DA Clubs that condone or contemplate match manipulation will be subject to immediate dismissal from the program and may face additional sanctioning. U.S. Soccer applies the FIFA Code of Ethics and prohibits involvement in sports betting by any DA Personnel or players, regardless of whether sports betting may be legal in your jurisdiction.

XII. RISK MANAGEMENT

A. Overview

U.S. Soccer 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.

Guidelines of behavior and procedures have been adopted for member Clubs, staff, volunteers and participants through the Safe Soccer Framework available at www.ussoccerda.com. 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.

B. Goal Safety:

Home Clubs are responsible for inspecting the goals and ensuring the safety of the goals. However, should the visiting Club suspect or become aware of a goal safety issue, they should immediately inform the home Club and the game official. Home Clubs must ensure the following:

1. Pre-Game: Inspect each goal to ensure
 - a) The goal is firmly secured to the ground with anchors;
 - b) All connecting hardware (nuts, bolts, etc.) is properly attached;
 - c) The structural integrity of the goal has not been compromised (cracks in welds or posts, etc.);
 - d) The goal is on a level (flat) surface; and
 - e) The net attachment system is secure and that there are no sharp edges.
2. Post-Game:
 - 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) inspect the structural integrity of the goal and promptly report any issues to authority responsible for maintenance;
 - 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.

C. 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. The Home Club is responsible to:

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 there is a restraining line for spectators at least five (5) feet beyond the touch line and outside of the field of play.

5. Inspect bleachers and seating areas
6. Inspect the field and surrounding areas for any possible “attractive nuisances”

D. Referee Responsibility for Safety:

The referee assigned to the game is responsible for inspecting the field and all equipment and is empowered to stop play until any safety concern is corrected. 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.

E. Club Liability:

To the extent that DA Clubs are not covered by the general liability insurance provided by USSF, DA 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.

F. Player Liability:

Players shall assume all risks, responsibilities and liabilities for loss, damage, injury or death to themselves 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.

G. Liability Waiver & Indemnification Form:

All coaches, administrators and players and their custodial parent or guardian are required to sign a liability waiver when they submit their registration.

XIII. EQUIPMENT

A. Uniforms:

Academy Players, Academy Coaches and DA 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 Players, Academy Coaches and DA Club Officials with offensive, obscene, distracting or age inappropriate tattoos may be asked to cover them for the duration of a game. DA teams are required to have one white (or similarly light colored) uniform and one dark uniform. Home teams will always wear white/light color uniforms and visiting teams will be required to wear their dark/contrasting uniforms on single-fixture weekends. In the event a club has a double fixture weekend, please refer to the Game Day Guide for the uniform protocol. DA teams are required to apply the Academy patch on the left sleeve or back collar of their game uniform. Uniform patches will be supplied to the DA team at no cost.

B. Soccer Balls:

All Academy Games are to be played with the official Development Academy game ball. U.S. Soccer will provide a set number of DA game balls at no cost to the DA Clubs. No game can be played without properly inflated DA game balls. There shall be a minimum of four (4) Academy game balls at each game which shall be inspected and subject to approval by the referee. All age groups play with size 5 balls.

C. Goals, Nets, Corner Flags and Benches:

Kwik Goal products are recommended. All goals must be properly anchored. An Academy game will not start without proper equipment, including secured goals, properly lined fields, and corner flags.

XIV. PLAYER AND COACH INSURANCE

XV. Each Academy Player and coach will be provided *secondary* medical insurance by USSF. This coverage provides secondary, not primary, coverage to eligible DA players who are properly registered by their DA Club pursuant to the registration rules; and have received approval by the Development Academy and are injured during DA tryouts, practices and YNT Identification Centers. To file a medical insurance claim, consult the Insurance Claim Guide and contact Academy Medical Staff at damedical@ussoccer.org. Additional information can be found on the Development Academy website [here](#). COMMERCIAL RIGHTS

All commercial rights can be found in the [Development Academy Branding Guidelines](#).

XVI. REFEREE & GAME INFORMATION

A. Overview:

The Referees and Assistant Referees will be assigned for each game by the USSF Referee Department.

B. Fees:

USSF will pay the Referees and Assistant Referees for all Academy games.

C. Game Report:

After each game, the Referee shall complete and sign the official game report Form. The Referee shall enter the game data using the online reporting system within 24 hours of the game. The DA Club will be responsible for reviewing the online game report and submitting corrections to the appropriate DA Staff member in a timely matter. The game report will be used to generate standings, track suspensions and record statistics.

D. Game Information:

On the game report, the Referee shall note all occurrences of significance, such as injury (serious, any suspected head injury, or any injury that requires emergency medical attention), 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.

XVII. COMPLIANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY REQUIREMENTS

All players and officers of the participating clubs shall comply fully with the DA Requirements and decisions of the DA Staff, Technical Committee and the Discipline Committee.

Disqualification of Individuals

1. DA Staff may disapprove, deny registration to and disqualify any individual, or deny membership to or otherwise discipline any DA Club, which employs or utilizes any individual who either fails to comply with the registration procedures, falsifies information, violates the DA Requirements, or as a result of such procedures is determined by the DA Staff to be unfit to continue in their current position.
2. DA Staff may use any information in its absolute discretion in determining disqualifications. Such information may include conviction of any felony, gross misdemeanors, violation of Development Academy guidelines or driving offenses, including: loss of license, reckless driving, impaired driving or a DUI.
3. Any person accused of physical or sexual misconduct or otherwise violating the Safe Soccer Framework may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by the DA 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 they will be reinstated to their 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.

XVIII. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The DA Staff shall issue any instructions necessitated by special circumstances that may arise. These instructions shall form an integral part of these regulations and may, in exceptional circumstances, override a specific regulation.

XIX. 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.

XX. RELEASE

By participating, the DA Clubs 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. Subject to the limits of applicable law, each Club shall indemnify, protect, defend and hold harmless the Federation and its directors, officers, employees and agents from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, actions, judgements and expenses including, without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and court costs, arising from or connected with any matters relating to the activities of the Club in connection with the Development Academy. For additional information, please refer to the waiver available on the Resources page at www.ussoccerda.com.

XXI. DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions apply to these regulations:

“DA” – means Development Academy

“DA Club” – means an organization that operates any of the U-13 through U-18/19 teams in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy and adopts the developmental principles outlined in the Development Academy Regulations and technical framework.

“Academy Competition” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy League schedule (inclusive of Development Academy Showcases), U.S. Soccer Development Academy Playoffs and U.S. Soccer Development Academy Championships.

“Academy Season” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy competition beginning in September and concluding in July including the Academy League, Academy Playoffs and Academy Championships.

“Academy Off-season” – means the time period after Academy Playoffs and Showcase (unless the team is participating in Academy Championships). Players are released from their current Academy obligations at this time (should a player not be with an Academy Championships team).

“Academy Regular Season” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy competition featuring games between DA teams beginning in September and concluding before the Academy Playoffs in June, inclusive of regional and winter showcases.

“Academy Showcase” – means the multiple U.S. Soccer Development Academy events held regionally and nationally by the Development Academy across all age groups. Club participation is mandatory at DA Showcases unless otherwise stated by the DA Staff.

“Academy Playoffs” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy competition held at the conclusion of the Academy Regular Season among the qualifying teams from the U-14 through U-18/19 age groups.

“Academy Championships” – means the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition held at the conclusion of the Academy Playoffs that determines the Academy National Champion for the U-14 through U-18/19 age groups, respectively.

“Academy Game” – means any game played between two DA teams as part of a U.S. Soccer Development Academy Competition.

“Academy Game Officials” – means the center referee, assistant referees, fourth official and any other game officials appointed by the U.S. Soccer Development Academy overseeing an Academy League Game, Academy Playoffs/Showcase Game or Academy Championships Game.

“Academy Player” – means an individual registered with an DA Club and participating in the Development Academy Program.

“DA team” – means a group of Academy soccer players registered with the Development Academy and participating with a DA Club in the U-13 through U-18/19 age groups.

“Academy Representative” – means an individual registered with the Academy Program or associated with the DA Club involved with the technical, administrative or overall leadership of the Academy.

“Academy Administrator” – means an individual registered with the Development Academy and affiliated with a DA Club to oversee the logistics of an DA team.

“Academy Coach” – means an individual who is registered with the Development Academy and selected by the DA Staff to coach an DA team.

“Academy Web Site” – refers the official Development Academy website, www.ussoccerda.com.

“Home Team” – means the DA team designated as the host of an Academy Game.

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

“Fixture” – means a set of scheduled games of multiple age groups versus one opponent

“Split Fixture” – means a single fixture that is played on more than one day