



CSSA Competition Rules and Regulations

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I. Overview

The purpose of the CSSA State Cups is to determine a CSSA Champion in each of the competitions. The State Cups are also for the enjoyment of the game for the participants. The State Cups are open to all CSSA affiliated teams. The Committee has the discretion, on an annual basis, to also allow combination teams and non-affiliated teams to compete. Alternative competitions may be arranged.

1.1 Definitions

FIFA: The Fédération Internationale de Football Association

Federation: United States Soccer Federation (USSF)

USASA: United States Adult Soccer Association

Association: The administrative body within the State of Connecticut as determined by the Federation to carry out soccer programs for adult players

Executive Board: Executive Board of CSSA

Committee: Competition/Cup Committee of CSSA

CCC: Competition/Cup Committee Chairman

State Cup: Cup Competition provided for by CSSA under these rules

Affiliate: An organization that conducts soccer programs in the State of Connecticut at the adult amateur level and is an active member, in good standing, of CSSA

League: An organization that conducts competition among teams

Club: An organization of one or more soccer teams, usually playing within a league

Eligible Player: A player who is properly registered under the rules of the CSSA and who is not under suspension

Competition Rules: This document, to be used as a directive for the conduct of CSSA Cups and other competitions as outlined herein. These rules apply to all involved in a CSSA Cup or similar competition

Game Report Form: The official referee report form approved by USSF

Official State Cup Entry Form: The only approved form to be used by teams wishing to enter and participate in Cup competition

Team Roster: The official roster of players, submitted by a team to participate in a given game

State Cup Line-Up Form: The only official form to be used as a list of players to take part in a given game/match*

Ground: A team's home field, or pitch

**the terms "match" and "game" are used interchangeably throughout this document and have the same meaning*

II. Cup Establishment, Format, and Governance

2.1 Competitions

The Cup competitions will be for Open, Over-30, Over-40, Over-50, and any other age group, provided that enough teams enter, as determined by the Committee.

Separate competitions will be held for men and women.

The Format of the State Cup or other competition will be either World Cup/round-robin style, or Single Elimination a.k.a. knock-out, which will be decided by the Committee, based on the number of teams entered.

2.1.1 Trophies and Titles

Each cup shall be named after an honorary CSSA contributor (e.g., Alastair Bell Cup). That trophy shall be held for one year by the tournament winner and then passed on to the next tournament champion, until one team has won that particular trophy three (3) times. This team will then be allowed to keep the trophy, and a new trophy will be named after a new CSSA contributor; the competition for the new cup shall begin all over again with a team needing three (3) wins to capture the new cup.

2.1.2 Playing Rules

a. Format

Each State Cup competition format will be determined annually.

b. Policies

- i. Prize money may be awarded depending on the number of teams applying; there is no entry fee.
 - ii. Goal Difference (GD) in group phase play will be capped at a maximum of five (5) goals per game.
 - iii. All players must be of age before the first scheduled match, excepting goalkeepers, who may be aged 25+ (O-30 Cup), aged 35+ (O-40 Cup), or aged 45+ (O-50 Cup), and who cannot play in the field if underage.
 - iv. Initial rounds of play will be by GROUPS OF FOUR, when possible. The Committee will round down the number of entries if the total entered is not divisible by four, with last or lower priority entries eliminated. Exceptions may arise and are at the discretion of the Committee.
 - v. Home teams will pay for the two Assistant Referees @ \$55.00 each. The visiting team will pay for the Head Referee @ \$85.00 – this applies to all Cup matches.
 - vi. All teams entering must secure home fields for all three group match dates to avoid scheduling conflicts/issues. All home fields are subject to Committee approval.
 - vii. Teams with questionable CSSA-wide disciplinary records may not be admitted.
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viii. The Schedule

1. Once the schedule has been generated, it will be entered as the official schedule. There will be no changes allowed to the official schedule unless at least one of the following exceptions are met:
 - a. Both teams involved in a match agree to play on a different date and/or time and/or location and the Committee approves the change. Note, one team cannot compel another team to reschedule a match;
 - b. Inclement weather does not permit a match to be played.
 - c. If weather postpones all matches on a given weekend, the schedule will be adjusted forward one week.
 - d. An individual field is closed by the town/owner.
 - i. Field closure requires documentation; otherwise, only the assigned referee and/or the Committee can close a field.
 - e. The home team is unable to play at the location originally identified on the schedule and can secure another field approved by the Committee at the original date and time and the travel distance for the opposing team is roughly the same, or less.
 - f. The field is found to be unplayable due to acts unforeseen by any team manager, such as vandalism or if a referee does not make it to the game.
 - i. Field closure by vandalism requires documentation from the town/owner; otherwise, only the assigned referee and/or the Committee can close a field.
 - g. There is an exceptional circumstance that the Committee, through majority vote, determines is warranted of postponing the match.
 2. If a game is postponed, moved, or rescheduled, the following conditions must be met. Failure to comply can result in additional fees and/or forfeiture of a match.
 - a. If teams mutually agree to change venues, date, or time of a match, it must be reported via email to the Committee at least one week before the match is scheduled to be played, and at least two weeks prior to the date of the original match.
 - b. Details of a makeup must be set within one week of the original match, and the game must be played within two weeks of the original match date, unless the Committee provides an exception.
 3. If teams cannot come to an agreement to replay a postponed match within one week of the postponement, the Committee will decide the details of the match.
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4. Teams cannot mutually agree to change the venues, date, or time of a finals match.
- c. Tournament Draw
- i. Following the entry deadline, the CCC Committee will verify all team entries for each competition with the CSSA Registrar and each team will be placed in the appropriate competition.
 - ii. First Round (aka Group Phase): The Committee will conduct a random draw to determine first round opponents as well as Home and Away team designation.
 1. All teams in a division will be placed in a random draw, which will produce the groupings. Those groupings will then be placed in a randomized tournament draw, producing the bracket.
 - a. For example, if a division has eight teams, there will be a random draw to produce the groups; it could look something like this:

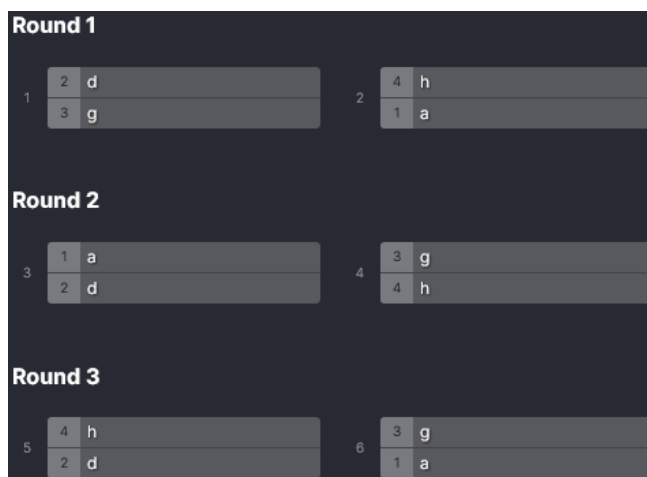
Group #1

- competitor #1: d**
- competitor #2: g**
- competitor #3: h**
- competitor #4: a**

Group #2

- competitor #1: c**
- competitor #2: e**
- competitor #3: f**
- competitor #4: b**

- b. Once the groupings are set, the random bracket will be drawn. It could look something like this for Group #1:



- i. NOTE: No team can play more than 2/3rds of their games at home. If they are selected to play all of their games at home, their home games will be

changed to away games starting with their last home game and then working forward.

- iii. Quarterfinals: Home field advantage and pairings will be determined by the following step-wise process:
 1. First Seed
 - a. If there are four groups, the four group winners will receive "first seed," meaning they will be seeded first in the four groups and gain home field advantage.
 - b. If there are more than four group winners, first seed will be determined by point totals amongst the group winners with the highest teams gaining first seed until all four of the quarterfinal home field spots have been consumed. Ties will be determined by head-to-head record, goal difference, goals for, goals against, then coin toss.
 - i. After first seed has been determined, the remaining group winners will be automatically placed in the pairings group.
 - c. If there are fewer than four groups, the group winners will automatically receive first seed; the remaining first seeds will then be determined by the highest point totals of the remaining group. Ties will be determined by head-to-head record, goal difference, goals for, goals against, then coin toss.
 2. Pairings
 - a. Quarterfinals pairings will be determined first by the stipulation that no team can face another team they faced in the group stage, then by the total points of the remaining teams, with the highest point total team playing the "home team" with the lowest point total; the second highest point total team playing the second lowest point total team, and so on.
 - i. If there are group winners in the pairings group, they will be seeded first in order by points among themselves. Therefore, there may be an instance where a group winner will be ranked higher in the pairings group and have fewer overall points than another team in the pairings group.
 - b. Ties will be determined by head-to-head record, goal difference, goals for, goals against, then coin toss.
- iv. Semifinals: The Committee will conduct a random draw to determine semifinals opponents as well as home and away designation.
 1. If there are not enough teams for a quarterfinal match, the Semifinals will be seeded using the same methodology as the

Quarterfinals with the exception that instead of "four group winners", the language would read "two group winners."

2. All winning teams from the Quarterfinals will be placed in a random draw which will produce the semifinals pairing and home field designation by order of the list. The first team drawn will be designated the home field team and the second team will be the away team. The third team will have the home field, and the fourth team will be away.
- iv. For example, if the below were the semifinals draw, Team C would play Team A at Team C's home field. Likewise, Team F would play Team H at Team F's home field.

Group #1

competitor #1: c

competitor #2: a

competitor #3: f

competitor #4: h

d. Forfeits

- i. Any team intending to forfeit a game must give written notice of its intention to do so to the delegate of the opposing team, with copies to the Committee, no less than seven (7) days before the date of the game.
- ii. If a game is forfeited with less than seven (7) days' notice, the score will be recorded as 3-0 against the forfeiting team, and that team may not be allowed to enter the State Cup or other State competition the following year.
- iii. A team using an ineligible player shall forfeit to the opposing team the game(s) in which the player played.
- iv. A team using an ineligible player shall be expelled from the competition and will be ineligible for the next year's tournament.
- v. A team shall also forfeit a game to the opposing team for failure to comply with the rules of the competition or for other just causes as determined by the Committee.
- vi. If a game is not completed due to weather or field conditions, the result of the match will stand if at least 70 minutes of the game have been played. Otherwise, the disposition of the game will be determined by the Committee. However, if the non-completion of the game results from misconduct clearly traceable to one or the other of the competing teams, its management, or its followers, as determined by the Committee, the Committee shall decide as to the disposition of the game, taking into consideration the Association's policy that the home team is generally responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- vii. In the case of replayed matches, the club which did not have the

- choice of ground in the first match shall have the choice of ground for the second, replayed match.
1. Each club must take precautions to keep its ground in fit condition. If for any reason a match is not completed, it must be replayed for the full ninety (90) minutes, with the exception outlined in item (vi.) above.
- viii. All incidents not covered above will be decided by the Committee.
- ix. Excepting (i.) above, any team forfeiting a cup or competition match shall be fined per the Fee Schedule.
1. Refusing to play, before or during a match, is considered a forfeit per CSSA rules; teams who forfeit a Cup match will be fined at the following rate:
 - a. \$100 for first or second game of group play
 - b. \$250 for third game of group play
 - c. \$350 for QF and SF matches
 - d. \$500 for State Cup Final
 2. Teams that forfeit any Cup match may be banned from next year's competition.
- e. Game Rules
- i. Immediately before the start of each game, a captain or team representative shall provide a typed, clearly legible State Cup Line-Up Form to the referee and a representative of the opposing team; this shall show the proper names and shirt numbers of the players on their respective teams.
 1. These line-ups shall be on the official forms provided for this purpose.
 2. Only those players named on the line-up forms handed to the referee before the game shall be allowed to play in that game.
 3. A club using a player not named on the official line-up form, or handwritten on the line-up form, loses the game and shall be fined and disciplined, per the Fee Schedule.
 - ii. In all games played in State competition, substitutes can be made during any stoppage (per FIFA Laws of the Game); a substitute must report to the Referee with his player pass before he can be allowed to participate. Substitutes will be allowed as follows:
 1. Open Age Competition – a maximum of seven (7) substitutes shall be allowed at any time during the game. This includes regular and overtime periods as well as re-entries. A player who has been substituted for shall be allowed to return to the same game, but shall count as a substitute.
 2. Age-Limited Competition – unlimited substitutions
 - iii. In single-elimination games, only one game shall be played to decide a winner; there shall be no tie games. In case of a tie at the end of the normal 90 minutes, there will be two 15-minute extra-time periods, per FIFA rules. Should there still be a tie at the end of extra
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- time, there will be kicks from the penalty spot, in accordance with FIFA rules.
- iv. The game must start at the hour appointed. Any team not “ready to play” at the scheduled Kick-Off time shall forfeit the game, unless the team that is ready to play agrees to wait for the offending team to be ready to play, by offering a ten-minute grace period. This occurrence will likely require shortening the match to two equal halves, per FIFA rules. If the offending team is still not ready to play after the ten-minute grace period, the match will be forfeited to the opponent. (Ready to play means a minimum of seven players on the field, with passes and line-ups checked by the referee.)
 - v. The deadline to change field venue, match date, or kick-off time is FIVE DAYS prior to the scheduled kick-off. Such changes must be agreed upon in writing by both teams, and the Committee.

2.1.3 Administration

The entire control and management of the Association competition shall be vested in a Competition or Cup Committee chaired by an individual appointed by the CSSA President. The President of the Association shall also appoint to this committee at least two (2) members of affiliated organizations. One or more committee members may be appointed for a cup game to look after the interests of the association. The CSSA is the sole arbiter of competition participation, rules, scheduling, results, and discipline.

- a. Duties – Competition Committee Chairperson (CCC)
 - i. Replacing any Committee member as may become necessary.
 - ii. Notifying all eligible teams of their status in State Cup or other competition play, including date, time, opponent, and location of games.
 - iii. Rejecting any entry for failure of a team to comply with the rules and regulations of the competition.
 - iv. Investigating and determining the eligibility of any player as may be required.
 - v. Certifying that all competing players are properly registered with CSSA on USSF/USASA player passes within the current season, or with CJSA or AYSO when applicable.
 - vi. Determining player or team suspensions.
 - vii. Determining locations of games.
 - viii. Determining extensions of deadlines as may be required for the good of the competition.
 - ix. The CCC shall ensure that he or she, or any other member of the Committee, do not participate in any protest, disciplinary action, or arbitration in cases which involves players, coaches, persons,
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teams, leagues, or any organization to which they have ties; this is in effort to avoid conflicts of interest.

- x. If applicable, furnishing the SRA or contracted Referee Assignor with a schedule of competition games in ample time to make the referee assignments.

b. Duties – Committee Members

Performing any assigned duties by the CCC, which may include but are not limited to:

- i. If applicable, providing the SRA or contracted Referee Assignor with enough copies of the rules of the competition for further dissemination to the need-to-know officials.
- ii. Notifying the team or teams within their respective leagues of such matters as competition schedules, rules of the competition, and other pertinent documents and directives.
- iii. Notifying the team or teams within their respective leagues of player or team suspensions.

c. Matters Not Provided For

The Committee shall have the power to alter or add to these rules, or the fee schedule, as it pertains to the Cups or other State competitions, from time to time as it deems expedient. The Association shall adopt such rules, regulations, and bylaws in reference to Cup competitions as shall be satisfactory to the CSSA membership.

III. Eligibility and Entries

3.1 Eligibility

3.1.1 Team

- a. Any team duly registered to a league affiliated and in good standing with CSSA or which is directly affiliated with the Association is eligible to enter a State Cup or other competition.
- b. At the Committee's discretion, non-affiliated teams, aka "non-league" teams, and combination teams may apply to enter Association competition and will be screened rigorously by the Committee and then approved by the Executive Board. Such teams shall meet stringent participation requirements which may include the posting of performance bonds. A non-league team may be a combination of two or more existing CSSA-affiliated teams.
- c. The Committee shall resolve any questions of team eligibility. Those decisions shall be final.
- d. Protests may be made to the Committee per the guidelines contained in these rules. Appeals of any Committee decisions may be made to the Association's Executive Board, per that governing body's appeals procedures.
- e. A team may only enter one State Cup competition in any given year.

3.1.2 Player

- i. All players shall be registered according to the rules of the Association.
- ii. A player qualified to play in any round shall be deemed eligible to play in any subsequent round by virtue of his original qualification.
- iii. Cup Rosters
 1. Official League Rosters will be used to create Cup Rosters.
 - i. Team roster deadline dates, aka "frozen roster dates," are at the discretion of the Committee; these details will be set and stated on the Cup Application form
 - ii. Once a roster has been submitted to the CSSA by the league, it becomes the team's Cup Roster. No changes can be made after the roster freeze dates, and any changes to your League Roster will be distinct from your Cup Roster.
 2. Combination rosters, guests players, club or non-league teams are not allowed.
 - i. These may be allowed in the Women's Cup; once rostered on a combination roster, players will not be allowed to transfer for the duration of the tournament.
 3. All players must be properly registered with a team, league and the CSSA, and must have a current player pass with a recent picture.
 - i. Physical player passes must be properly laminated on both sides and must state the team to which the player is registered.
 4. A player registered on a team roster for the beginning of the Cup must stay tied to that team for the duration of the competition.
- d. Suspensions
 - i. A player under suspension is not eligible to participate in any State Cup competition until the suspension has been served.
 - ii. A player who has been suspended may play in postponed, drawn, or replayed matches after his term of suspension has expired.
- e. Professional Status
 - i. Each participant on a team competing in these competitions may be an amateur or professional player, duly qualified according to the rules of the USSF and CSSA, and must be properly registered with CSSA.
 - ii. A player's professional status does not expire because of the player not having signed a professional contract or played professionally in recent years (see USSF Policy on Amateur Reinstatement).
- f. Each individual Cup category is a separate competition. A player may not play for more than one competing team within any single category. A player may participate in more than one category of Cup competition.
- g. Players may be required to provide proof of age using a government-issued photo ID presented to the referee, along with his/her player's pass, for all

games requiring age limitations. Such players must meet minimum age requirements of the cup category the player is competing in, at the commencement of the competition. Teams may not place underage field players on rosters, prior to the start of the competition, who then become age-eligible during the competition.

- h. Exceptions may be made to accommodate member league exemptions, specifically pertaining to goalkeepers, e.g., leagues that allow goalkeepers to be no more than five years younger than field players. Underage goalkeepers cannot participate as field players.
- i. To play in the Quarterfinals, Semifinals or the Final, a player must have been rostered per the Committee policy stated on the entry form.

3.2 Entry

- a. Deadline for entry will be set by the Committee and stated on the entry form.
- b. No player may be registered for the competition after the Association's Cup registration deadline.
- c. Only a team which has done the following will be considered to have officially entered the tournament:
 - i. Completed the Official Entry Form, which can be downloaded from the CSSA website, for CSSA State Cup competition.
 - ii. Accompanied the Entry Form with the non-refundable entry fee, if applicable, as stated in the CSSA Fee Schedule or Entry Form.
 - iii. Submitted both of the above to the designated Committee member(s), via email, before the stated entry deadline.
 - iv. Has been screened by the Committee as follows:
 - 1. Has an acceptable disciplinary record, past and present; and
 - 2. Is in good standing with either its affiliated league or with CSSA, if affiliated directly with CSSA.

IV. Playing Requirements

4.1 Uniforms

Where the colors of competing clubs are similar, the home team must change. Goalkeepers must wear colors which distinguish them from other players and the referee(s).

4.2 Coaches

Only properly registered coaches and managers in good standing with a current, laminated CSSA league-issued coaches pass will be allowed to participate with a team in the FIFA-designated Technical Area (in front of or near the team bench.)

4.3 Team Benches

The bench area is limited to coaches, trainers and players, and must be situated on the opposite side of the field from any spectators.

4.4 Player Discipline

- a. Any player serving a suspension from his/her own league, or any other sanctioned competition, may or may not be eligible for Cup play, depending on the current CSSA Minimum Suspension Policy.
- b. Players competing in State Cup competition will be disciplined according to established CSSA and USSF policies.
- c. Exhibition games or indoor games will not be considered official games for the purpose of credit toward disciplinary suspensions, as they relate to State Cup competitions.
- d. The Committee shall have the power to disqualify and remove from further participation in the competition any team or player(s) of any competing team who may be proven guilty of any breach of the rules of CSSA, USASA, or the USSF.
- e. All notices of disqualification or suspension shall be forwarded by email or fax to the Committee, the team's league, and the affected team(s).

V. Protests

- a. All questions of eligibility, qualifications of competitors, or interpretation of rules shall be referred to the Committee, whose decision shall be final, but no objection relative to the ground, goal posts, or bars or other appurtenances of the game shall be entertained by the Committee unless a protest is lodged in writing with the referee and captain of the opposing team before the commencement of the match. No protest or any objection shall be entertained by the Committee unless the club lodging the protest shall have deposited, per registered letter or certified mail, within three (3) days, Sundays and Holidays not included, with the Secretary of the Association, the sum indicated on the CSSA Fee Schedule which shall be forfeited in the event the protest is not sustained. In such cases, if the Committee deem fit, they may order the protesting club to pay such sum as they may consider necessary toward defraying the expenses of the club protested against. No protest or objection shall be withdrawn without the consent of the Committee.
- b. Any dispute occurring between clubs in the competition shall be referred to the Committee for its sole arbitration; its decision shall be final and binding on both sides. Should either of the two clubs in dispute have a member on the Committee, said member shall not be allowed to sit on the Committee while such protest or dispute is being considered. Protests shall be made in writing and a copy shall be lodged with both the Secretary of the Association and the secretary of the club protested against, within three (3) days of the game (Sundays and Holidays not included). Such protests shall be accompanied by the grounds upon which the protest is founded. The date of postmarked letter shall be the date of filing. Each club may support its own case with witnesses, who must be invited to appear at the hearing to present their case in person, before a decision can be reached.
- c. In any dispute between clubs in this competition involving identity of players, the Committee must invite the clubs involved and have them produce the principles for the purpose of identification and questioning. In such cases, the protesting club shall

be required to deposit with the Association used, if the protest is dismissed, to defray the expenses of the club protested against. If the protest is upheld, the amount deposited shall be returned, and the offending club will be required to pay its own expenses.

- d. No attorney-at-law shall represent a club at the hearing of a protest unless he is the secretary of the club concerned and appears as such officially in the Association records.

VI. Officials

6.1 Assignment

- a. The CSSA or contracted Referee Assignor shall appoint the referee and assistant referees for all Cup games.
- b. The referee's report on the Cup games and line-ups of the teams must be filed with the CCC within 48 hours of the game, Sundays and Holidays not included. Date postmarked or date of the email sent shall be the date of the filing.

6.2 Fees

- a. Fees for the referees officiating State Cups shall be set annually by, and at the discretion of, the Executive Board, and shall be documented in the CSSA Fee Schedule.
 - i. In preliminary or round-robin games, as well as Quarterfinal and Semifinal games, the home teams are responsible for paying the Assistant Referees and the away team is responsible for paying the Head Referee.
 - ii. Payment of fees for the State Cup Finals in each category is the responsibility of the Association.