



GEM STATE CHALLENGE 2026

ELIGIBILITY, FORMAT AND PLAYING RULES

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1. GEM STATE CHALLENGE NAME, PHILOSOPHY

Section 1.1 Name

The Gem State Challenge is a tournament designed to provide a fun and competitive environment for all players, coaches, referees, and spectators.

1.2 Philosophy

We strongly believe that soccer should be enjoyable for everyone involved. Sportsmanship is expected at all times from players, coaches, and spectators. We encourage a relaxed atmosphere where respect for opponents and officials is paramount.

2. GOVERNANCE/ TEAM APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

2.1 The Gem State Challenge is sanctioned by Idaho Youth Soccer Association (IYSA) and follows all policies, rules, and guidelines approved by IYSA, FIFA, US Soccer, and US Youth Soccer.

2.2 Any team registered with IYSA or USYS and in good standing may apply for entry into the Gem State Challenge. Teams with US Club only affiliation will be permitted, with an additional cost determined by IYSA.

2.3 All applications must be received by the deadline established by IYSA for the tournament; fees are due at the time of registration and will be collected at the time of/ before acceptance.

3. TOURNAMENT FORMAT AND MEDALS

3.1 Teams will compete in bracket play, leading to semi-finals and finals where applicable. Points accumulated during bracket play will determine advancement when applicable. IYSA will use Round Robin to determine first and second if numbers require this format.

3.2 Medals will be awarded for 1st & 2nd place

4. PLAYING RULES

4.1 Laws of the Game, Field of Play

4.1.1 All games shall be played in accordance with FIFA/ IFAB Laws of the Game, except as modified by these rules.

4.1.2 Nets and Flags will be provided and set up by IYSA

4.2 Rosters, Minimum Number of Players, Match Cards

4.2.1 Roster sizes for all ages shall be a maximum of 22 players

4.2.2 Game Roster sizes for all ages shall be a maximum of 18 players

4.2.3 The minimum number of players to begin or continue a game shall be 5 players in the U9-U12 age groups and 7 players in the U13-U19 age groups. Teams must be ready to begin at the scheduled time. A forfeit will be declared if a team cannot field the minimum number of players at the start time.

4.2.4 Teams and team officials (maximum of four (4), e.g. coach, assistant coach, manager, trainer) will be on one sideline. Parents and spectators will be on the opposite sideline across from their team

4.2.5 Each player can only play on one team for the duration of the tournament.

4.2.6 Teams will be limited 4 guest players from outside of their club

4.2.7 The official record of the game will be kept on a match card given to the referee prior to the match. Only those players and coaches listed on the match card, **which will be printed by IYSA**, will be permitted to participate in each game.

4.2.8 Each team must have its team roster, medical releases, and travel papers for teams outside of Idaho.

4.2.9 Player passes will not be checked during the game but must be available upon request.

4.3 Alternate Jersey

4.3.1 The home team will wear a light-colored kit. The visiting team will wear dark colored kit. The team in the incorrect color will have to change. The referee has the authority to remedy the situation as he/she sees fit.

4.4 Unsafe Equipment

4.4.1 Matters of safety are left up to the discretion of the referee. Equipment which may be considered unsafe includes the following but not limited to: jewelry (including taped/ untaped earrings, nose rings, watches), head, arm, thigh or hip pads containing sole leather, fiber, metal or any unyielding material, hard casts of any material and knee braces made of hard unyielding material and may be made safe by applying an appropriate amount of padding. The dangerous use of any equipment previously approved by the referee during the game may be cause for removal of the player from the game until the equipment is made safe. Players can receive approvals for equipment from the State Youth Referee Administrator; however, the match official must approve the safety of the equipment.

4.5 Duration & Ball Size

4.5.1 The length of games will be as listed below:

Age	Half Length	Ball Size	Game Format
U9-10	25	4	7v7
U11-12	25	4	9v9
U13-14	30	5	11v11
U15-16	35	5	11v11
U17-19	35	5	11v11

4.5.2 There will be no stoppage time in ANY games without approval from the IYSA Staff

4.5.3 At all ages there will be a 5-minute halftime.

4.5.4 During round robin / bracket play ties will stand. (See Tiebreaker Guidelines)

4.6 Semi-Final and Final Tiebreaking Procedures

4.6.1 If tied at the end of regulation, the winner will be decided by FIFA "Kicks from the Penalty Mark." No Overtime will be played.

4.7 Substitutions

4.7.1 Any unlimited number of substitutions will be permitted at any stoppage of play at the referee's discretion.

4.8 U10-U11 Law Modifications

4.8.1 **Intentional/ deliberate heading** is not permitted in U9, U10, and U11 age groups. Any deliberate header in these age groups will result in an indirect free kick from the spot of the infraction.

4.8.2 Punting and **drop-kicks** are not permitted in the U9 or U10 age groups. Any punt in these age groups will result in an indirect free kick from the spot of the infraction.

4.8.3 Buildout Lines--

- 4.8.3a Buildout lines will be used in the **U9 and U10 age groups**. During a goal kick or when the keeper has the ball in their hands during play, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. The keeper can pass, throw, or roll the ball into play (punts and drop-kicks are not allowed).
- 4.8.3b. After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal. The ball is in play once it is released from the goalkeeper's hands.
- 4.8.3c Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build out line, however, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner, but (s)he does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.
- 4.8.3d The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway spot and the build out line. Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line.

4.9 Inclement Weather/ Official Game Policy

4.9.1 The IYSA Environmental Policy will be applied in all games. Link to the policy can be found [here](#).

4.9.2 In the event that a game is abandoned due to inclement weather, the following procedures will be followed:

- *If the game had at least reached half time then the score stands as is.*
- *If the game had not reached half but one team was 3 or more goals ahead then the score stands as is*
- *If the game had not reached half and there was less than a 3 goal difference then kicks from the mark will determine the winner and a 1-0 score will be recorded. Any game rostered player can participate in the kicks from the mark. Should either time, light or severe weather prevent the shootout from taking place, then the game will be declared a tie. If this occurs in a championship round then the Director of Competition will determine the procedure as conditions permit.*
- *If severe weather results in some games not being able to even start due to time constraints then the tournament committee will have full discretion over determining a result*

4.9.3 The tournament director has full discretion over rescheduling due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

5. POINT SYSTEM & FORFEITS

5.1 All Gem State Challenge round robin games will be scored using the following system:

- **Win:** 6 points
- **Tie:** 3 points
- **Loss:** 0 points
- **Shutout:** 1 point (including 0-0 ties)
- **Goals:** 1 point per goal up to 3 per game
- The greatest maximum points per game is 10

5.2 When “Wildcards” are used for advancement, these wildcards are based upon overall points, regardless of bracket.

5.3 Forfeits:

5.3.a In the event of a forfeit, the team forfeited against will be awarded 7 points or the average of points earned in games played, whichever is greater

5.3.b The outcome of all prior games with the forfeiting team will stand

5.3.c Additionally, in the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team and coach shall be disqualified from further competition in the current tournament and may face further sanctions from the IYSA Board of Directors.

6. TIEBREAKERS

6.1 When teams are tied on points, the following tiebreakers will be applied:

1. Results of head-to-head competition within the Round.
2. The **total** difference between goals scored and goals allowed within the Round with a maximum difference of four (4) goals **per game**.
 - a. This calculation is not a cumulative difference, but rather by adding the goal differential between each individual game. Example: G1 5-0 (+4), G2 1-2 (-1), G3 3-1 (+2)= +5 total.
3. The least number of goals allowed within the Round (max 4 **per game**).
4. The most goals scored within the round (Max 4 **per game**). For a team with forfeit wins, goals scored in forfeited games shall be equal to its average goals allowed in its other games within the Round.
5. Kicks from the Penalty Mark

In the case of a three way tie, once the first team is advanced or eliminated using the above criteria, then the remaining two teams will start the process again from the beginning of the tie- breaker criteria starting at 1.

If FIFA penalty kicks must be taken in a three-way tie, there will be a draw by IYSA with at least two impartial witnesses. First team drawn will receive a bye. The next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of PK'S. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in PK'S to

determine the group winner. The bye team will be the home team. This is only used if there are more than two (2) teams tied after going through the Tie Breakers.

7. TEAM BREACHES OF RULES

7.1 Player Send Off: A player that has been sent off during a match must remain in the team bench area until the conclusion of the match. Players that remain with their credentialed team rep. in the technical area must remove their player jersey. If a sent off player continues to be disruptive or a distraction to anyone in the bench area, they will be escorted from the area to Headquarters and the suspension may be increased by the Tournament Committee upon review of incident. The Tournament Committee has the right to modify and change the player sendoff policy/rule at any time during the competition.

7.2 Coach Send Off: A coach or team official that has been sent off during a match must leave the immediate sight and sound vicinity of the playing field. Non-compliance with immediate exit of sight and sound will be reviewed by the Tournament Committee and the suspension may be increased.

7.3 Any ejected player who has been asked to leave the game by the referee will automatically be suspended for the next game. Coaches and assistant coaches sent off the field for an infringement of the "laws of the game" shall be suspended for the next game. "Club" coaches or coaches listed on multiple rosters who are suspended will serve their suspension during the next scheduled game(s) involving the team they were coaching at the time of their suspension.

7.4 When serving a suspension, a coach shall not attend nor be involved in any manner with the game being played. This includes any form of communication with the team immediately prior to or during the game. If the coach or team official should show up at the game site, and in any way attempt to participate in the game, his or her team will automatically forfeit the game.

7.5 **Review:** The Tournament Director will review all red cards and will have the ability to recommend further sanctions on any disciplinary action, to the Tournament Appeals and Discipline Committee. The S Tournament Committee has the right to impose additional penalties including, but not limited to, suspension for more than one game. Any violations of the US Soccer Referee Abuse Policy will be handled following sanctioning guidelines from US Soccer. Protests of an ejected player or coach being asked to leave the game shall be filed with the Tournament Committee per rule 10.

8. SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT, DRONES, WEAPONS & TERMINATED GAMES

8.1 All participants must adhere to the IYSA Code of Conduct, US Youth Soccer Code of Conduct, IYSA referee abuse policy, IYSA Zero Tolerance addendum, and Boise Parks and Rec Code of Conduct Policy.

8.2 Unsportsmanlike behavior, by participants or spectators, including dissent towards referees or opponents, will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Please refer to IYSA's Referee abuse policy and Zero Tolerance policy.

8.3 **NOISE-MAKING DEVICES (I.E. DRUMS, HORNS, COWBELLS, ETC.) AND WEAPONS OF ANY KIND ARE PROHIBITED.**

8.4 Drones of any kind are not allowed at Simplot Sports Complex without a proper permit. This permit must be on hand with the operator. Drones must also be flown outside the perimeter of the field at all times. Drones can also not be flown over the top of people.

8.5 If a referee terminates a game for reasons other than weather or field conditions, the IYSA Tournament Committee will decide the results of the game.

9. IYSA/ BOISE PARKS & REC CONDUCT POLICY

12.1 Per the License agreement between IYSA and Boise Parks & Rec, all spectators must also abide by the following conduct policy. While it is impossible to list every type of conduct that is unacceptable, the following are examples of behavior that violate this policy:

- Harm or threat of harm to any City employee, member of the public, City government, or City property, *regardless of location*.
- Physical violence against persons or property.
- Sabotage of City property or processes.
- Theft or unauthorized removal or possession of the City's property or another person's property from City premises.
- Speech or conduct with the public that violates commonly accepted standards and that, under present circumstances, has no redeeming social value, including the use of profane, indecent, or abusive language.
- Speech or conduct deemed rude, disrespectful, aggressive, intimidating, harassing or otherwise inappropriate when conducting licensee's business.
- Making malicious, vindictive, false, and/or harmful statements about others or engaging in verbal abuse, altercations or outbursts.
- Any conduct that obstructs, disrupts, or interferes with City business, service, work environment or administrative functions, including City sponsored events.
- Untruthfulness related to use of the license which could hinder or jeopardize the City's interests.
- Use, possession, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs, paraphernalia, or controlled substances not prescribed to the user by a physician, on City property or at City sponsored events, including the use of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances while working in accordance with the license.

10. PROTEST AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

10.1 The Tournament Committee, explained in rule 11 of the rules, shall hear all protests and appeals arising from the competition and shall serve as a discipline committee and as a credentials committee, if necessary. All questions relating to the qualifications of competitors, to interpretation of the rules, to suspensions or any dispute or protest whatever shall be referred to the Committee. Decisions of the Committee shall be final and binding and cannot be appealed. A plea of ignorance of the rules and regulations of this competition is not sufficient ground for appeal or protest. Any protest relating to the grounds, goal posts, bar or other appurtenances of the game shall be entertained only if a written objection has been lodged with the referee and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.

10.2 The committee shall immediately notify the team against which such protest is made. A copy of the protest and all particulars will be delivered to that team, which will then have the right to defend its case, with or without witnesses.

10.3 All protests must be accompanied by the fee of \$250.00 **cash** and shall be submitted in writing to the Tournament Headquarters within one-hour (1) of the conclusion of the game being protested. **No personal checks will be accepted.** The Committee shall call a meeting to order within one hour of receipt of the written protest. The hearing of any protest shall be in closed session and shall be chaired by the Director of Competition, or their designee, who may invite testimony. Any protest relating to “judgment calls” by the referee is not sufficient grounds for appeal or protest.

10.4 To be valid and eligible for consideration, each protest:

1. Must be verbally lodged with the referee and with the opposing coach at the game site before entering the field or before leaving the game site.
2. Must be filed with the committee, including:
 - a. Fee in the amount prescribed in cash; and
 - b. Five (5) written copies of the protest, which must include the details on which the protest is being lodged; and
 - c. Five (5) written copies of any information to be presented by witnesses.

10.5 A plea of ignorance to the rules and policies is not sufficient grounds for protest. Judgement decisions of the referees are not subject to protest. The Protest Administrator shall compile the necessary information to hear the protest from all available sources before the protest is heard. This shall include, but not limited to, coaches, field marshals, referees, assessors, witnesses, if necessary, etc. All materials will be treated with confidentiality.

11. TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

11.1 The IYSA Tournament Committee will have full authority on making decisions regarding interpretation of these rules. The IYSA Tournament Committee will also have full authority to make decisions as they see fit, in instances where the rules do not cover a given situation.

11.2 The Committee must operate in the best interest of all parties to find solutions to any issue that falls in line with IYSA and USYS policies.

11.3 Members of the Appeals and Discipline (IYSA Tournament) Committee will be one of each of the following:

- IYSA Staff Member
- Idaho State Referee Committee (ISRC) Member
- IYSA Board Member

12. PLAYER SAFETY, MEDICAL, & CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

12.1 Trained medical personnel will be onsite and available

12.2 All players who are suspected are suffering a head injury will be evaluated by **IYSA assigned medical personnel**

12.3 Players cannot return until evaluated and cleared by the IYSA-appointed evaluator. If diagnosed with a concussion, a formal medical release is required before returning.

13. USE OF THE COURT SYSTEM

13.1 US Youth Soccer Bylaw 704, Section 1 states that, “No member of US Youth Soccer, official, league, club, team, player, coach, administrator, or referee may invoke the aid of the courts of the United States or of a state without first exhausting all available remedies within the appropriate soccer organizations, and as provided within US Youth Soccer.”