



Rules and Regulations

Application and Entry Process

Teams wishing to enter the festival must complete the application form through our website by [clicking here](#) and submit payment as directed. Applications are accepted only when payment is received. Entries are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Register early to avoid disappointment. Registration closes August 1 or when an age group reaches capacity.

Eligibility

1. Teams and players must be registered for the current season with Ontario Soccer or another Canada Soccer Member Association.
2. Teams from outside Hamilton Soccer must provide all travel or playing-out approvals required by their governing association.
3. Match-day rosters must comply with current Ontario Soccer registration and player-movement requirements.
4. Mixed-gender participation is permitted only as allowed by current Ontario Soccer policies.
5. A maximum of four registered team officials may occupy the technical area.
6. Team acceptance is at the sole discretion of the Festival Committee.
7. A team withdrawing after August 1 forfeits its entry fee.

Age and Divisions

This festival is open to teams in the age groups listed below:

Under 8 Boys or Girls - 5v5 Grassroots Festival Format
Under 9 Boys or Girls - 5v5 Grassroots Festival Format
Under 10 Boys or Girls - 7v7 Grassroots Festival Format
Under 11 Boys or Girls - 7v7 Grassroots Festival Format
Under 12 Boys or Girls - 9v9 Grassroots Tournament Format
Under 13 Boys or Girls - 9v9 Grassroots Tournament Format

Ontario Soccer Team Rosters and Registration

All coaches and managers must have an official, current Ontario Soccer-approved team roster available at all times. The roster must be submitted before the first match by email to info@mhysc.org or in person at least one hour before kickoff. Only registered and approved players and team officials may participate.

Section 1 – Ball

- 1.1 The home team is required to provide the game ball.
- 1.2 U8-U9 divisions use a size 3 or size 4 ball. U10-U12 divisions use a size 4 ball. U13 divisions use a size 5 ball. The referee determines whether the ball is suitable.

Section 2 – Game Duration

- 2.1 Match durations and daily player limits are:
 1. U8-U9 5v5 Festival - 2 halves x 20 minutes. Two matches per team and no more than 80 minutes per player per day.
 2. U10-U11 7v7 Festival - 2 halves x 25 minutes. Two matches per team and no more than 100 minutes per player per day.
 3. U12-U13 9v9 Tournament - 2 halves x 30 minutes. No player may exceed 120 minutes of match time per day.
- 2.2 The minimum rest between matches will be at least the duration of one scheduled match.
- 2.3 A match is deemed completed when at least one half has been played.
- 2.4 If a match is abandoned by the referee, the Festival Convenor will determine its administrative status under the applicable rules.

Section 3 – Players and Coaches

- 3.1 For 5v5, each team fields five players including a goalkeeper.
- 3.2 For 7v7, each team fields seven players including a goalkeeper.
- 3.3 For U12-U13 9v9, each team fields nine players including a goalkeeper.
- 3.4 If a team cannot field the required format, the referee and Festival Convenor will apply the current governing rules and prioritize safe, developmentally appropriate play.
- 3.5 Only registered players and registered team officials are permitted in the technical area.
- 3.6 All players should receive fair playing time of at least one-half of available match time and be encouraged to experience different positions.

Section 4 – Player Equipment

- 4.1 Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered by socks.
- 4.2 Players must wear matching team jerseys. A unique number must be recorded when required by the match sheet. Pinnies may be used to resolve a colour conflict.
- 4.3 Players may not wear jewellery and it may not be covered with tape. A medical alert bracelet or necklace may be worn only when safely secured.
- 4.4 Sport-specific braces may be worn when safe and appropriately covered, as determined by the referee.
- 4.5 Corrective eyewear must be designed and secured for active sport. The referee has final authority on safety.
- 4.6 Footwear must be appropriate for the playing surface. Metal studs are not permitted.
- 4.7 When team colours conflict, the home team must change jerseys or wear pinnies.

Section 5 – Ball Out of Play

- 5.1 The ball is out of play when it wholly crosses the touchline or goal line.
- 5.2 The ball is also out of play when the referee stops play for an offence, misconduct, injury or safety concern.

Section 6 – Restart of Play

- 6.1 When the ball crosses the touchline, U8-U11 play restarts with a dribble-in or pass-in. U12-U13 restart with a throw-in. The restart is taken by the opposing team.

- 6.2 When the ball crosses the goal line, play restarts as follows:
- a) For U8-U9 5v5, play restarts with a goal kick. Corner kicks are not used unless Ontario Soccer has expressly authorized the current pilot format.
 - b) For U10-U13, a goal kick is awarded when the attacking team touched the ball last. A corner kick is awarded when the defending team touched it last.
 - c) After a goal, play restarts with a kickoff by the team that conceded the goal.
- 6.3 For U8-U9 5v5 and U10-U11 7v7, free kicks are indirect except for penalty kicks in 7v7. U12-U13 9v9 uses the current Ontario Soccer adapted match laws and applicable IFAB provisions.
- 6.4 All other restarts, required distances and technical offences will be administered under the current Ontario Soccer Adapted Match Formats.

Section 7 – Penalty Kick

- 7.1 Penalty kicks are not used in U8-U9 5v5. Penalty kicks in U10-U11 7v7 and U12-U13 9v9 follow the current Ontario Soccer adapted match laws and field markings.
- 7.2 All players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must remain outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark and at the required distance.
- 7.3 The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, in line with or behind the goal line when the ball is kicked.

Section 8 – Offside Rule

- 8.1 There is no offside in U8-U11. Offside is applied in U12-U13 9v9 under the current Ontario Soccer adapted match laws.

Section 9 – Slide Tackling

- 9.1 A tackle is not prohibited solely because a player slides. Any tackle that is careless, reckless or uses excessive force will be penalized by the referee.
- 9.2 Goalkeepers are subject to the same safety standard. The referee determines whether a challenge is fair or an offence.

Section 10 – Retreat Line

- 10.1 For U8-U9 5v5, the retreat line is the halfway line.
- 10.2 For U10-U11 7v7, the retreat line is the one-third line.
- 10.3 There is no retreat line in U12-U13 9v9.
- 10.4 Opponents must remain behind the retreat line until the ball is touched by a teammate, leaves the field, crosses the retreat line or the goalkeeper chooses a quick release.

Section 11 – Substitutions

- 11.1 Unlimited substitutions are permitted. In 5v5, substitutions may be made on the fly or at a designated stoppage. In 7v7 and 9v9, substitutions may be made at any stoppage with the referee's permission.
- 11.2 Substitutions must support fair playing time and must not delay the restart of play.

Section 12 – Cautions

- 12.1 For U8-U9, the referee will explain offences and use age-appropriate management rather than displaying cards. Serious misconduct will be reported.
- 12.2 For U10-U13, cautions and second-caution dismissals are administered under current Ontario Soccer discipline rules and the applicable adapted match laws.

Section 13 – Dismissals

- 13.1 A player or team official may be dismissed for conduct identified in current Ontario Soccer and IFAB rules.

1. Serious foul play.
 2. Violent conduct.
 3. Biting or spitting at any person.
 4. Denying a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence.
 5. Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick or penalty kick.
 6. Using offensive, insulting or abusive language or actions.
 7. Receiving a second caution in the same match.
- 13.2 A dismissed participant must leave the field and technical area as directed by the referee and Festival Convenor.
- 13.3 Any suspension or further sanction is determined under current Ontario Soccer discipline rules. A team must not assume the participant is eligible for the next match.
- 13.4 Repeated or serious misconduct will be reported to the appropriate governing body.

Section 14 – Team Responsibilities

- 14.1 Each team is responsible for the conduct of its players, team officials and supporters. Spectators must remain in the designated area opposite the technical area.
- 14.2 Harassment, intimidation or interference involving a referee, player, team official, spectator or event representative may result in removal and disciplinary action.
- 14.3 Teams must provide fair playing time of at least one-half of available match time and encourage players to experience different positions.
- 14.4 Maximum match-day rosters are 12 players for U8-U9 5v5, 14 players for U10-U11 7v7 and 18 players for U12-U13 9v9.
- 14.5 A maximum of four registered team officials may be in the technical area and must be listed on the match sheet.
- 14.6 Matches are subject to Ontario Soccer severe weather, lightning and safety protocols. The referee and Festival organizers may delay, suspend, abandon or cancel play when conditions are unsafe.
- 14.7 Teams must carry an official roster approved for the current outdoor season by their governing association.
- 14.8 Teams from outside Hamilton Soccer must carry any required travel or playing-out approval.
- 14.9 Ontario Soccer policies governing registration, player movement and eligibility apply.
- 14.10 Use of an ineligible player will be referred to the Festival Convenor and the appropriate governing body for an administrative and disciplinary decision.
- 14.11 An ineligible player includes a person who is not properly registered, uses a false identity, is suspended or participates without required guest, temporary or call-up approval.

Section 15 – Trial Players, Call Ups and Temporary Players

- 15.1 Current Ontario Soccer registration, fast-tracking, call-up, trial and temporary player rules apply.
- 15.2 A player may participate only when properly approved and may not play for more than one team in the same division on the same day unless expressly authorized.

Section 16 – Referees

- 16.1 U8-U9 matches may use a trained Game Leader or an Ontario Soccer registered match official. U10-U13 matches will use an Ontario Soccer registered referee.
- 16.2 The referee's decision to delay, suspend, abandon or cancel a match for safety is final.

Section 17 – Tournament Scores and Standings

- 17.1 U8-U11 divisions remain festival-style, without published scores, standings, placement, elimination or championship games.
- 17.2 The U12 and U13 Boys and Girls divisions will operate as an Ontario Soccer-sanctioned 9v9 tournament. Scores and event standings will determine the finalists.
- 17.3 All group-stage matches for both age groups and both genders will be played on Saturday. Each U12 and U13 Boys and Girls championship final will be played on Sunday.
- 17.4 Points are three for a win, one for a draw and zero for a loss. Ties are resolved by head-to-head result, goal difference, goals scored, fewest goals against and then a Festival Committee draw.
- 17.5 The schedule must provide fair playing time, no more than 120 match minutes per player per day and at least one match-length of rest. A tied final proceeds directly to kicks from the penalty mark, without extra time.

Section 18 – Discipline

- 18.1 Discipline will be administered under current Ontario Soccer judicial matters policies and the applicable district rules. Alleged match official assault will be handled by the appropriate governing body.
- 18.2 Discipline by Review will be used where authorized by current Ontario Soccer rules.
- 18.3 When Discipline by Hearing is mandatory, the Festival Convenor or Hamilton Soccer will notify the affected parties.
- 18.4 A person accused of match official assault is automatically suspended from all soccer activity as required by current Ontario Soccer rules until the matter is disposed of.

Section 19 – Discipline Procedures

- 19.1 Disciplinary action will follow current Ontario Soccer judicial matters policies and all applicable district or league procedures.
- 19.2 Discipline by Review may address dismissals and suspensions arising from:
 - 1. Receiving a second caution in the same match.
 - 2. Serious foul play.
 - 3. Violent conduct.
 - 4. Offensive, insulting or abusive language or actions directed at a match official.
 - 5. Offensive, insulting or abusive language or actions directed at another person.
 - 6. Denying a goal or obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence.
 - 7. Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a free kick or penalty kick.
- 19.3 **Protests and Appeals**
 - 1. An administrative protest must be submitted in writing within 30 minutes of the match by a team official listed on the match sheet.
 - 2. The Festival Convenor will review the protest under current Ontario Soccer published rules.
 - 3. No protest concerning a referee's decision on facts connected with play will be heard.
- 19.4 If these festival rules conflict with the event sanction, current Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards, Ontario Soccer Adapted Match Formats or Ontario Soccer policies, the current governing document prevails.

