

General Youth Competition Guidelines

- [Minors \(Under 18\) Player Info](#)
- [School-based Play vs. Youth Club](#)
- [Gender Division Eligibility](#)
- [Coaching Certification Requirements](#)
- [Name/Logo/Uniform Guidelines](#)
- [Youth Competition Schedule Standards](#)
- [Game Scheduling Formats](#)
- [Team Seeding](#)
- [Forfeit Rule](#)
- [Rules](#)
 - Middle School and U-15 recommended rules
 - Spirit of the Game
- [Observers](#)
- [Player Minimums](#)
- [Violations and Sanctions](#)

[back to top](#)

Minor (Under 18) Player Info

Minors participating in any event must have a [Medical Authorization Form](#) completed prior to participation. A team with minors on it must have one or more approved, background-checked chaperones listed on the team's official roster.

The Medical Authorization Form is the responsibility of the chaperone; it must be brought to each USAU event and kept on hand by the chaperone. This form will allow medical personnel to treat an injured minor without a parent/guardian having to be present. **Note:** *A Medical Authorization is not the same as the USAU liability waiver (which can be signed on a player's account homepage).*

School-Based vs. Youth Club

For school-based events, i.e. High School and Middle School State Championships, it is expected that all students are competing with their primary full-time school where they are seeking a diploma or equivalent. If all students do not attend the same school, they must request exceptions in advance according to the guidelines of that event.

For youth club events, i.e. YCC and Youth Club Regionals, teams may consist of any youth players within their youth region. Overall, the youth division is designed to support players who are in the high-school phase of life or younger.

Gender Division Eligibility

In their USA Ultimate membership account, every athlete should select the gender identity option that best aligns with their gender identity. When registering for a USA Ultimate sanctioned or championship series event, athletes should select to participate in the division in which they feel most comfortable and safe based on their indicated gender identity.

1. Players who select Man (cis or trans) as their gender identity option are eligible to compete in men's/boys' divisions or as a man-matching player in mixed divisions.
2. Players who select Woman (cis or trans) as their gender identity option are eligible to compete in men's/boys' or women's/girls' divisions, or as a woman-matching player in mixed divisions.
3. Players who select the Non-Binary or Prefer to Self-Report gender identity option are eligible to compete in the division in which they feel most comfortable and safe, as per [USA Ultimate's Gender Inclusion Policy](#) (approved 11.2020).

Note: For those who select Prefer to Self-Report, in the USA Ultimate member account profile, there will be a fill-in option to provide any additional information regarding your gender identity. This is for internal educational purposes only and will not be shared.

4. On-field personnel ratio rules for the mixed division are described in each event's specific guidelines.

Coaching Certification Requirements

Coaches must fulfill event requirements in order to be on the side line and have field access.

Name/Logo/Uniform Guidelines

USAU reserves the right to alter, or require a team to alter, a team name, player nickname, team logo, jersey graphic, or uniform and/or suggest alternatives at or in conjunction with a USAU program or event should USAU personnel determine that the existing name, logo, graphic, or uniform might hinder the mission of the organization or the goals of a specific USAU program or event. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual references, profanity, drug references and any discriminatory language or graphics. Alterations must meet with the approval of USAU personnel.

Youth Event Competition Schedule Standards

1. Only eligible players can compete in sanctioned youth events.
2. Maximum amount of time that players are at the fields is 9 hours per day (start of first game to final hard cap).
3. Maximum amount of actual game play time is 6 hours per day.
4. Minimum of 30 minutes from hard cap (end) of one round to beginning of the next round.
5. If teams have more than 4 hours of game play time (typically more than 2 games), at least one 1-hour break between games is recommended.

Formats

State Championship tournament formats will be determined by State Youth Coordinators using [USAU format guidelines](#) for the Championship Series, and will be approved by Regional Youth Directors. [Contact](#) your Competition State Youth Coordinator for information.

Seeding

Seeding for the HS State Championships will be done by the SYC using the following information: input solicited from all the coaches/captains of participating teams; results of head-to-head match-ups prior to the Championships; results of previous years' Championships; and other applicable information such as team composition during or prior to the Championships. The SYC has the authority to adjust rankings according to the best information available.

Forfeit Rule

1. A team must play all of its scheduled games at a tournament.
 - a. Any team that declines to finish a scheduled game or games or attempts to decide a match by any manner other than playing ultimate on the field will forfeit those games. Should both teams in a match choose not to play, then it will be considered a double forfeit.
 - b. At the discretion of the event's USAU coordinator, consideration may be given to situations that might warrant an exception being made, provided it does not affect the fairness or integrity of the competition.
 - c. Consideration should be given if a team misses a game because of travel problems.
2. If one team is not ready to play at game-time, points may be assessed in accordance with the current edition of the [USAU Official Rules of Ultimate](#). Under these conditions, if the score of the game reaches 8-0, the team that has failed to signal readiness will technically forfeit the game (see rule above).
3. A team will be considered to have forfeited any game where the number of players that can safely participate falls below the minimum requirement set by the Event Organizer for that specific event (see "Player Minimums" below).

Rules

USAU Youth Club and High School Championship events will be played using the current edition of the [USAU Official Rules of Ultimate](#). Any changes to these rules must be pre-approved by the USAU Championship Series headquarters staff.

- For Middle School State Championships and Youth Club U-15 divisions (and younger ages), there are specific Youth rules recommendations. These recommendations can be found [here](#) under "Appendix D: Youth Rules Adaptations". Please fill out [this form](#) and let us know what rules and/or format you are using or not using and why.
- Read more at the following embedded links about
 - [Spirit of the Game \(SOTG\)](https://usultimate.org/spirit-of-the-game/) - <https://usultimate.org/spirit-of-the-game/>,
 - [Spirit captains](https://usultimate.org/resources/spirit-captain-role/) - <https://usultimate.org/resources/spirit-captain-role/>
 - [Spirit scoring](https://usultimate.org/resources/?_resource_filters=spirit-of-the-game) - https://usultimate.org/resources/?_resource_filters=spirit-of-the-game
 - [Limiting implicit bias within the SOTG structure](https://usultimate.org/equity-diversity-inclusion/spirit-of-the-game/) - <https://usultimate.org/equity-diversity-inclusion/spirit-of-the-game/>

Observers

If officials are used during USAU Youth or High School Championship events, they must be [USAU Certified Observers](#) or Instructional Observers, and their duties must be in line with those described in the [USAU Observer Manual](#). Any changes to these duties must be pre-approved by the Manager of Youth Competition and National Team Programs.

If captains want observers to be present at a tournament, they must notify the event coordinator at least 4 weeks prior to the tournament. This will facilitate recruitment prior to the event. The use of observers is subject to the availability of observer staff.

Player Minimums

USAU Youth events set specific player minimum requirements for both registration and competition.

1. Registration Minimums: Set to determine whether a team can officially register for an event.
 - a. School-based and other sanctioned play: 10 total players minimum, and for mixed divisions, at least 4 man-matching and 4 woman-matching players.
2. Competition Minimums: Set to determine whether a team can continue to compete safely at an event.
 - a. 7 players to start, 5 to continue playing. Fewer than 5 is a forfeit. For mixed: 8 players to start, 4 man-matching and 4 woman-matching players. 5 to continue playing.
3. Some events may have a higher level of requirements for both registration and competition minimums.

Violations and Sanctions

Failure to abide by any of the Competition Guidelines may result in sanctions through the [USA Ultimate conduct process](#). Such sanctions may be imposed on a team or individuals associated with a team deemed to be in violation of the guidelines, and may include, but are not limited to, suspension or disqualification from USA Ultimate competition.

Youth Regions

- **Central:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- **Northeast:** Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia
- **South:** Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia
- **West:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah

Application and compliance of all guidelines will be subject to the discretion of the State Youth Coordinator, Regional Youth Director, and USA Ultimate Manager of Competition and National Team Programs - Youth.