2026 Blue Ridge Cup Soccer Tournament

Saturday September 5th and Sunday September 6th 2026

RULES:

1. **Laws of the Game**: All tournament matches will be played in accordance with FIFA laws of the game except as modified herein. All decisions by the Tournament Director are final. **No protests allowed**.

2. **General Prohibitions**: Alcoholic beverages, smoking, pets, and noise makers are prohibited.

3. **Team Acceptance/Check-in Procedures**:
a. The tournament committee reserves the right to accept or reject any team application.

b. Any incomplete application will be returned to the sender and not processed for registration. The application is not considered complete until the entry fee is received.

c. No team shall be deemed accepted unless written notification has been sent from the Tournament Director or their application has been accepted and paid for in Gotsport.

d. Once accepted, the application is non-refundable.

e. Upon acceptance, all teams will be provided a time-line for paperwork submission. If required paperwork is not received, participation in the tournament may be jeopardized.

f. Accepted teams are required to have laminated player passes (as required by association) and current medical release form. The medical release form does not have to be notarized and may be the form you use for league play.

g. An approved team roster needs to be provided to tournament officials, along with current passes for each player and team official on the official roster.

h. A check for entry fee that is returned from the bank will not be re-deposited. The amount of the check plus $35.00 (cashier's check or money order) must be received by the tournament committee seven days after the team representative is notified of the returned check. If new funds are not received the team will be disqualified from the tournament.

i. **Online Check-In: Deadline is August 28, 2026.** Each team is to check-in through the GotSport account in which they applied to the tournament. The following documents must be uploaded to GotSport, (1) Copy of Official Approved Roster with guest players written legibly on the bottom, (2) A copy of each Player Card including guests. Additionally (3), a Permission to Travel Form for out of state teams from the home state association should be emailed to the Tournament Director for non Region 1 USYS teams.

Any team missing the online application deadline must notify the tournament immediately and make alternate arrangements. There will be no check in at the fields during the tournament; however all team documentation must be available upon request by tournament officials including match referees.

4. **Official Documentation**: You must participate with your 2026/2027 roster. Guest players are allowed up to five. A current official medical release form and valid player passes are required

(laminated only if your association requires such). Exceptions to these requirements must have written approval of the Tournament Director. Exceptions are subject to review by the Tournament Director.

5. **Teams Allowed To Enter Tournament**: Travel Teams are eligible to apply for this tournament.

6. **USSF Affiliate Members (Not USYSA Members)**: Teams that are members of organizations of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) but not members of US Youth Soccer (such as AYSO, SAY, USSSA, US Club Soccer or Super Y Leagues) DO NOT have to have a US Youth Soccer Application to Travel form (although that team's organization may require that the team have permission). An approved team roster does need to be provided to tournament officials, along with current player passes from its organization.

7. **Guest players**: Guest players (up to 5) are to be legibly written on a copy of the official roster (not original) to be provided at check in. Guest players must have valid player passes, medical release, and permission to travel. Note: A guest player from another state association must have a permission to travel from their appropriate State association. Note: **Region One** teams do not require a permission to travel.

All player passes must match the affiliation of the roster. For example, if the team roster is USYSA, then all players on that team must have USYSA passes. A player may not guest play on a USYSA roster with a US Club player pass, and vice versa.

Players may only play for one team in the tournament. *Exception* Goalkeepers are allowed to play with multiple teams within the same club as long as they are age appropriate. They count towards the 5 maximum allowable guests per team.

8. **Permission To Travel**: Teams from outside Region 1 will need to have permission to travel from their appropriate State association. Region 1 has established the following policy concerning permission to travel when attending US Youth Soccer sanctioned tournaments in Region 1. The purpose of this policy is to make it as simple as possible for the US Youth Soccer Region 1 teams to travel to tournaments within Region 1. The new policy states that any US Youth Soccer State Association teams within Region 1 that are accepted into a tournament in Region 1 do not need permission to travel papers. Permission to Travel is not required in friendly games within Region 1.

National State Associations in Region 1:
Connecticut Jr Soccer Assn
Delaware Youth Soccer Assn
Eastern New York Youth Soccer Assn
Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Assn
Soccer Maine
Maryland Youth Soccer Assn
Massachusetts Youth Soccer Assn
New Hampshire Soccer Assn
New Jersey Youth Soccer Assn
New York State West Youth Soccer Assn
Pennsylvania West State Soccer Assn
Soccer Rhode Island
Vermont Soccer Assn
Virginia Youth Soccer Assn
West Virginia Soccer Assn

9. **Player Equipment**:
a. Teams should bring a primary and alternate jersey of different colors. Where the color of the jersey is similar or identical, the designated home team (the team listed first in the schedule) will change jerseys.
b. All players must have uniforms with individual numbers on the jersey. *As this is an early season tournament, if teams have been unable to receive their regular jerseys they must at least have a matching color shirt with unique numbers.*
c. No jewelry may be worn by any player (earrings, watches, necklaces, etc.)
d. Players wearing casts are allowed to play with the approval of the Tournament Director and Referee.
e. Shin guards are mandatory and must be worn at all times by all players.
f. All referee decisions are final regarding player equipment.

10. **Substitutions**: Substitutions are unlimited, but made only at the following times:
a. Goal Kick
b. After a goal
c. Half-time
d. At the beginning of the overtime period.
e. Throw in – by possession team and by opposing team in conjunction.
f. After a yellow card – for carded player
g. An injured player may be substituted at the discretion of the referee. If a substitution is made for the injured player, the opposing team may also make one substitution.

11. **Heading Rule at Age Group Divisions U11 and Younger:** Whenever the ball strikes a player in the head, play is stopped. The proper restart depends upon whether the player deliberately played the ball with his or her head. If deliberate, the proper restart is an indirect free kick for the opposing team. If this occurs within the goal area (small box), the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line (small box line) parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If the play by the head is deemed as inadvertent, then the proper restart is a dropped ball.

- For divisions with U11 and U12 teams, the division will play to the U12 rules.

12. **Player/Coach/Spectator Behavior**: Any player ejected from a match will NOT be replaced and will NOT be allowed to participate in his or her team's immediate next match. Ejection for fighting by players and coaches will result in the player or coach NOT being allowed to participate in ANY remaining tournament matches. Any coach ejected from a match will not be allowed to coach his/her immediate next match. Each Coach is responsible for the conduct of the players and parents on his/her team. Coaches not taking responsibility for their sideline's behavior may be cautioned and/or ejected.

Any player or coach ejected or spectator asked to leave will not be within sight or sound of the playing field. Per FIFA rules, only players will be shown a card (yellow or red) when being cautioned or sent-off. Two yellow cards in the same match equal an ejection and the player will sit out his/her next immediate match.

13. **Home/Team Field Positions**: The Home team is listed first in the schedule. The Home team will change jerseys if there is a conflict. Each team's players will take a position on one side of the field opposite the spectators.

14. **Referees**: In the event of a shortage of Assistant Referees, club linesmen will be used.

15. **Balls**: U11-U12 will use size 4 balls. U13 and above will use size 5 balls. Tournament match balls will be available at each tournament location. Teams may elect to use their own balls. Once the tournament ball supply has been depleted, no further tournament balls will be made available.

16. **Match Length**:

U11-U14 - Two 30 minute halves
U15-U16 - Two 35 minute halves
U17-U19 - Two 40 minute halves

a. There will be a 5 minute half time between the first and second halves of all matches.

b. The tournament does not require the referee to add time for substitutions. The official clock will NOT stop for any reason unless in the judgment of the referee removing an injured player from the field would endanger the physical well-being of the player. The Tournament Director has the discretion to continue any game shortened due to injury.

17. **Number of Players/Team Size**: U11-U12 will play 9v9 with goalkeepers. U13 and older will play 11v11. Max roster sizes for U11-U12 teams is 16 players. Maximum for U13-U19 teams is 22 players, with only 18 players eligible to play each match.

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18. **Advancement in Tournament Play:**

a. Divisions with 4 teams (one group of four teams):

i. In U14 and younger divisions teams will play each other once with the top two teams advancing to a final.

ii. In U15 and older divisions teams will play each other once round robin style and the winner and runner up will be determined by points – no final or championship match.

b. Divisions with 5 teams (one group of five teams): Teams will play each other once round robin style and winner and runner up will be determined by points – no final or championship match.

c. Divisions with 6 teams (two groups of three teams):. Each team will play two preliminary matches within its group. At the conclusion of preliminary round matches, teams will be ranked in their respective group.

i. In U14 and younger divisions the top two teams in each group will advance to semi-final and potential final matches. The third place team from both groups will play a consolation match vs each other.

ii. In U15 and older divisions the seeded teams will play their corresponding seed from the opposite group, #3 seeds vs one another, #2 seeds vs each other and the #1 seeds play a Championship Match. (no semifinals)

d. Divisions with 8 teams (two groups of four): Each team will play three preliminary round matches. At the conclusion of preliminary round matches, teams will be ranked in their respective groups with the top two teams advancing to a final match.

e. Divisions with 10 teams (one group with four teams, two groups with three teams): Each team in both of the three team groups will play two preliminary round matches. At the conclusion of those preliminary round matches, the teams will be ranked in their respective group with the top teams in each group advancing to a semi-final match vs each other. The second two teams will play a consolation match, as will the third teams from both of the three team groups. The winner of the semifinal match between the top teams in the three-team groups will advance to a final match against the winner of the four-team group. Each team in the four-team group will play three preliminary round

matches with the top team advancing to a final match vs the winner of the semifinal between the first place teams from the three team groups.

f. Divisions with 12 teams (four groups of three teams each): Each team will play two preliminary matches within its group. At the conclusion of preliminary round matches, teams will be ranked in their respective groups with the top team in each group advancing to semi-final and potential final matches. The second and third place teams in each group will play a consolation match vs second and third place teams from other groups.

19. Determination of Division Winners:

a. Three (3) points will be earned for a win, one (1) point will be earned for a tie and no points are earned for a loss. Tie games after a semi-final match will immediately proceed to FIFA penalty kicks to determine a winner (no overtime). Final matches resulting in a tie will proceed to two, full five minute overtimes. If at the end of both overtimes the game is still tied, FIFA penalty kicks will be taken to determine a winner.

b. Where required to break a tie for standings within a division or group, or for purposes of determining a "wild-card" team, the following order will be used to determine the winner: (Note: If a wild card team **MUST** be selected for the playoff rounds, that team will not be assigned to play against the winner of its own group in the first playoff round)

i. Head to head competition – Except where three teams are tied. In the case where three teams are tied, begin with tiebreaker number (ii). Once/if one team has been eliminated from the three way tie, return to i. to determine the tie- breaker between the remaining two teams.

ii. Most wins

iii. Goal Differential (up to 5 goal limit per match)

iv. Fewest Goals Against

v. FIFA penalty kicks. If necessary, these penalty kicks will be scheduled by the Tournament Director, either for Saturday evening or immediately prior to the semi- final or championship match.

20. **Forfeits**: A forfeit shall be awarded if a team is not present and prepared to play within ten minutes of the scheduled commencement time. An extra ten-minute allowance (20 minutes) shall be made for semi-final and championship matches. **Any team forfeiting a preliminary match will not be allowed to play in a semi-final or championship match.** It is requested that teams be present 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled commencement of a match to aid in the timely start of play. Seven players constitute a team for 11v11 matches and six for 9v9 matches. As soon as the minimum number of players is present by game time or within the grace period, the match must be started. A forfeit will be scored three for the winner, and zero for the forfeiting team. The Tournament Director has the discretion to amend forfeit scores as deemed necessary for the fairness of the tournament. Tournament Director's ruling on forfeit scores is final and binding.

21. **Inclement Weather/Cancellation Policy**: Regardless of weather conditions, coaches and their teams must appear at their respective field site, ready to play as scheduled. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the match. Only the Tournament Director may cancel or postpone a match. Referees may suspend a match only. In case of severe weather, in his/her discretion, Tournament Director(s) may cancel any and all games. In case of severe weather that occurs after the beginning of play, the Tournament Director may reduce the length of the match and may discontinue or cancel

the game. Should a match be terminated due to weather conditions after 20 minutes of play, the match will be considered official and the score at the time will stand. If a match is terminated prior to 20 minutes of play, every attempt will be made to complete the match. However, if necessary, other means determined by the Tournament Director may be used to determine a winner. Referees and field marshals will not consider beginning or continuing matches when a lightning storm exists**. NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE EVENT OF CANCELLATION. Note: Your application constitutes agreement with these rules and this paragraph.**

22. **Withdrawal Policy:** As per Rule 3d - Once accepted, an application is non-refundable. Teams may receive refunds for withdrawal prior to the tournament only at the discretion of the Tournament Director for the most extreme circumstances.

23. **Disclaimer**: Neither the Tournament Director, Virginia Soccer Alliance or the Tournament Sponsors are responsible for any expenses incurred by any team in the event the tournament is canceled in whole or part, or in the event games are discontinued or canceled due to inclement weather or adverse field conditions, nor will any refunds be made. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to decide all matters pertaining to the tournament. The judgment of the Tournament Committee is final. The Tournament Director has authority to make all decisions and these decisions will be final. All referee decisions are final and binding.

24. **Team Contact Information**: Each team, upon check in, must provide a team contact, the team's coach or the team's assistant coach so that these individuals may be contacted in the event that circumstances require such. Be sure your team contact is someone who can be reached at any hour and has a cell phone. All inquiries/questions with the Tournament Committee should be from the Team Contact/Coach and not numerous parents from the team as this only delays response.

25. **Housing Service**: Teams traveling from more than 75 miles away must utilize the tournament's housing service provider for hotel accommodations. Links and contact information can be found on the tournament website.

26. **Important Notes**:

a. Have all player passes, official roster, and medical release forms with you at the fields during the tournament. Although only checked at check in, the tournament committee reserves the right to check credentials during the event.

b. The tournament is dedicated to the development of all the players participating, good sportsmanship, and the "good of the game." The Tournament Director may suspend, without recourse or appeal, any players, coaches, or spectators who demonstrate anything less.

End of tournament rules