

US YOUTH SOCCER 2025-26 NL SUNSHINE CONFERENCE OPERATING PROCEDURES

(As of July 29, 2025)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the National League Rules for Team-Based Leagues, the NL Sunshine Operating Procedures is an extension of those NL rules. When NL rules are referenced or summarized in these operating procedures, they are meant to mirror the NL rules in every respect. These Operating Procedures are specific to the NL Team Premier 1 - Sunshine and NL Club Premier 2 - Sunshine divisions.

The National League Team-Based Rules can be viewed [HERE](#)

The National League Club-Based rules can be viewed here: [HERE](#)

SECTION 1. N L SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – TEAM APPLICATION

1.01 Registration System / Process

GotSport shall be the official team application/registration system of the NL Team P1 Sunshine & NL Club P2 Sunshine divisions. Any eligible team must register their team into either division using GotSport. No registrations will be received or accepted in any other system.

Eligible teams must have a GotSport account to register for NL Sunshine. Team accounts must have accurate information regarding the coach and manager at the time of submission. In completing any registration, the teams must submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from conference participation.

1.02 Registration Deadlines

13U-19U NL Team P1 & NL Club P2 Sunshine Application Deadline:
June 20, 2025.

1.03 Fees and Other Expenses

The Early Bird Team Entry Fee to participate in the NL Sunshine is \$920 per team; The Standard Team Entry Fee is \$1,020 per team. Team Entry Fees are non-refundable if a team is accepted and later drops out.

Withdrawing from the league after the schedule has been released will result in forfeiture of the entry fee plus an additional \$1,000 fine. Withdrawing from the league after playing at least one game will result in forfeiture of the entry fee plus a \$250 fine for every match remaining when there are ten (10) or less matches not played. If more than ten (10) matches remain, the additional fine will be a set amount of \$2,500.

State Association's may have a higher entry fee to cover additional costs associated with the operation of the league. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with Section 8 (Referees) of this document.

SECTION 2. NL SUNSHINE – LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATION

2.01 Structure

The 2025-26 NL Sunshine will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2013 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2012 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2011 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2010 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2009 or later

- 19 and Under (19U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later

Within NL Sunshine, there will be a single competition tier, and a division may include up to 20 teams. Teams may be split into groups and require a playoff to determine the overall age group champion. In special circumstances, additional teams may be accepted and age groups may be combined.

2.02 NL Postseason Qualification (National League Cup)

The National League Cup (NL Cup) is the postseason competition for the top teams within the National league. Each division champion from the NL Team Premier 1 – Sunshine will automatically qualify for the National League Cup (Southeast Playoffs) that same season year.

2.03 NL Winter Event Qualification

The National League Winter Events qualify top NL teams into the USYS National Championships or the NL Cup. Each division champion from the NL Team Premier 1 – Sunshine will be automatically accepted (should the team apply) into a NL Winter Event for the next season year.

SECTION 3. NL SUNSHINE – TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters

The official Team Roster for the NL Team P1 & NL Club P2 - Sunshine shall be in GotSport. Teams are responsible for ensuring that their GotSport Sunshine Team Roster (with regards to Primary Players) is identical to their Official State Association Roster. The GotSport roster must be accurate by 24 hours prior to a team's first match of the season. A team's State Association may impose an earlier deadline. Additions to the Team Roster, subject to the requirements of a team's State Association, must be updated in the GotSport roster no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to a Sunshine Conference weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match - waivers can be granted by the League Manager at his or her discretion to update the roster after this deadline but before the match starts.

3.02 Team Match Day Line-Ups

Up to eighteen (18) players (including both primary players and club pass players) are eligible to play in each NL Sunshine match. Eligible players must be listed on the GotSport Match Card. The GotSport Match Card will be used as the official Team Line-Up prior to each NL Sunshine match, and the official Match Report following each NL Sunshine match. The process, timing, and verification of the Team Line-Up and Match Card must be done in accordance with Section 9 (Match Day Procedures) of this document.

Players on the team roster not eligible/participating in a NL Sunshine match are allowed in the team bench area but must not be in uniform.

SECTION 4. NATIONAL LEAGUE SUNSHINE – SCHEDULING AND MATCH MANAGEMENT

4.01 Number of Matches

Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of four (4) matches in a season. Most age groups in the NL Sunshine will play between twelve (12) – twenty-four (24) matches in a round-robin format. The final match count will be determined by the number of accepted teams into a division. The deadline to complete all Sunshine matches is May 3, 2026. FYSA can extend this deadline due to extreme circumstances.

4.02 Match Schedule and Rest Periods

The league intends to play only one match per day; however, when circumstances dictate, no more than two (2) matches a day may be scheduled. Every effort will be made to provide a minimum of three (3) hours rest between matches. Most circumstances involving teams playing two (2) matches in a day will be related to rain-out reschedules.

4.03 Inclement Weather and Unplayable Field Conditions Prior to Match

The Host Club is responsible for notifying the League Manager as soon as possible if matches on scheduled fields are unable to be played due to field closings or inclement weather.

If lightning is in the immediate area, the Referee and/or Site Administrator will suspend play or delay start of the match. USSF Lightning Policy will be followed. Such delay or suspension must remain for a minimum of 30 minutes past the last sighting of lightning or longer at the discretion of the Referee. Teams must wait a minimum of one hour before postponing a match due to weather. If a match is cancelled prior to starting or during the first half due to weather, the match will be rescheduled and replayed in its entirety. In the instance that teams and the referees wait the designated amount of time but first half is unable to be completed, the referees are to be paid 50% of the match fee. Matches in which the first half of the game has been completed may be considered official by the **League Manager** and the final score will be the score at the time the match is terminated. FSPL, FYSA, USYS, nor anyone affiliated with them, assumes any responsibility or liability if a match is cancelled in whole or in part for any reasons, weather related or not. The league reserves the right to delay, postpone, or cancel a game due to unfavorable/extreme weather conditions. Any match that is rescheduled due to weather will be played at the host location of the original game unless an alternate location is agreed upon by both teams. The league will have the authority to determine the location of a match rescheduled due to weather or unplayable field conditions.

Red card suspensions will not be considered served for matches that are cancelled prior to starting or during the first half due to weather. Red card suspensions will be considered served if the match has been considered official. Any cards that are received during the first half of a match that is cancelled due to weather will not carry over to the restarted match.

Postponing a Game Prior to Start - A game may be postponed no earlier than two hours prior to kickoff due to inclement weather, unless agreed to by both teams and the League. In a case where a third party (field owner) closes the venue, a game may be cancelled more than two hours prior to kickoff, as long as the League and both teams are notified in writing by the host club. If referees are not given the proper notification of the postponement and arrive to work the match, they are to be paid by the host team or the team causing the postponement. Clubs must notify referee assignors of the postponement. Referees will only receive payment for weather related cancellations if they are not notified properly.

4.04 Rescheduling Policy

Once the NL Sunshine schedule is published it shall be considered official. All changes to the schedule shall be made in accordance with the parameters below. Any rescheduling situation not included herein will be determined at the sole discretion of the League Manager.

- a) The Reschedule Policy is applicable to NL Team Premier 1 & NL Club Premier 2 teams.
- b) The Reschedule Policy can be viewed in [Appendix A](#) of these Operating Procedures

4.05 Emergency Match Management Procedures

On an emergency basis, the League Manager reserves the right to impose emergency Match Management Procedures. These procedures shall be limited to those items that are necessary, in the sole opinion of the League Manager, in order for a match to be played. Such procedures could include, but are not limited to, the following.

- (a) Shortening match lengths or half time due to inclement weather, lack of light, or other extraordinary circumstances.
- (b) Moving a match to earlier or later in a day.
- (c) Establishing additional match day(s) due to excessive rainouts.
- (d) Approving the use of less than a 3-man referee crew or approving use of a "club" linesman.
- (e) Approving an alternate method to validate eligible players.

4.06 No Contest

Any match that is not played or terminated where both teams or neither team is at fault will be marked as a "No Contest". A match that is labelled a "No Contest" may be rescheduled at the discretion of the League.

SECTION 5. N L SUNSHINE – STANDINGS

5.01 Uneven Number of Matches

If teams in the same division end the season with an uneven number of games, points per game (total points divided by games played) will be used for teams with at least 50% of matches played. However, if points per game results in a change in the standings between two teams, head-to-head will be used to determine final standings. If head-to-head does not apply, then points per game will stand, followed by:

- A. Team with greater Total Wins divided by games played.
- B. Team with greater Total Net Goal Differential divided by games played.
- C. Team with fewest Total Goals Against divided by games played.
- D. Blind draw will be held to determine the final standings.

SECTION 6. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – REFEREES

6.01 Referee Assignor

The hosting State Association will determine which referee assignor will assign each event hosted in their State Association boundaries. Referee assignors must be a certified US Soccer assignor. The referee assignor shall be paid by the hosting State Association, at designated neutral site events. For Home & Away matches, the Home Team will be responsible for assigning referees and paying the referee assignor fee. Each team will be responsible for splitting the referee fees for all matches, per rule below (6.02).

6.02 Payment of Referees

Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid according to the policies of the hosting State Association. The pay rate shall be established by Florida Youth Soccer Association (FYSA). Referee fees will be split between the Home/Away teams for all matches.

Referee Fees:

Referee Game Fees – Per Age Group				
AGE GROUP	REFEREE	ASST REF	TOTAL PER TEAM	Required currency
13U & 14U	\$70.00	\$50.00	\$85.00	20/20/20/20/5
15U & 16U	\$80.00	\$55.00	\$95.00	20/20/20/20/10/5
17U & 19U	\$100.00	\$60.00	\$110.00	20/20/20/20/20/10

6.03 Filing of Match Report & Referee Supplemental Report

Prior to each NL Sunshine match, each team shall present a GotSport “Match Card” to the Referee, which shall serve as the Official Team Line-Up prior to the game and the official Match Report following the completion of the game. The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and use it to check-in the players from both teams. The selected Match Card will become the official Match Report.

If a player is sent off for Violent Conduct, Spitting, or Abusive Language, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site Conference Official or referee assignor with the Match Report. Additionally, a US Soccer Supplemental Report must be filled out and submitted to the on-site Conference Official or referee assignor for situations involving Referee Abuse or Referee Assault. The Center Official or referee assignor shall submit all Match Reports and US Soccer Supplemental Reports to the League Manager. For Home/Away matches, referees will need to send supplemental reports via the [Game/Supplemental Report Form](#) on GotSport.

SECTION 7. SUNSHINE CONFERENCE – MATCH DAY PROCEDURES

7.01 Match Day Procedures

The NL Sunshine Match Day Procedures apply to all matches played in the NL Sunshine, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager.

All NL Club-Based Premier 2 – Sunshine teams will be required to follow the Hosting Standards which can be viewed in [Appendix B](#) of these Operating Procedures. These hosting standards will only be applicable to teams in NL Club Premier 2 – Sunshine.

All NL Team-Based Premier 1 – Sunshine teams will be required to follow the Hosting Standards which can be viewed in [Appendix C](#) of these Operating Procedures.

7.02 Team Line-Up - Players

The GotSport generated Match Card shall be the official Team Line-Up for the NL Sunshine. The Match Card must include the eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and primary one players) a team will use in a NL Sunshine match. Should more than eighteen (18) players appear on the card, the Coach or Team Official must manually strike through the players that will not participate (prior to check-in by the referee) for a maximum of eighteen (18) eligible players. Suspended players do not need to be included in the gameday 18-player roster.

7.03 Team/Player Check-In

Prior to the start of a NL Sunshine match, each team shall present the referee with the copy of the Match Card and their properly prepared US Youth Soccer Player Passes.

The Referee shall select one of the Match Cards and check-in each team's players using both the Match Card and the US Youth Soccer Player Passes. Only a maximum of eighteen (18) players may be checked in for a Conference match. Any player not present at the time of check-in may not enter the field of play until the Referee can properly check-in the player. The League Manager may designate an on-site Conference Official to perform any required check-in.

7.04 Post-Match Protocol

Following the completion of each NL Sunshine Match, the Referee shall accurately report all scores and cards issued onto the selected Match Card (now the official Match Report). Once the scores and cards issued are written on the Match Report, it should be presented to both coaches for their signature. Each team must take a picture of the final Match Report for their own records. Match Reports must be uploaded by the Home Team into GotSport. The report must be kept by the Home Team manager until the end of season. The Home Team is responsible for entering the final score along with misconducts (Red Cards) into GotSport within two (2) business days of the match completion date. Failure to do so will result in a \$50 fine.

Instructions on how to enter scores, red cards & upload the match report can be viewed [HERE](#).

7.05 Final Authority

The League Manager shall have final authority to act in the best interest of the NL Team Premier 1 & NL Club Premier 2 Sunshine, which may include but not limited to adjusting Match Day Procedures for specific matches or making decisions to address situations not covered in the NL Sunshine Operating Procedures.

Appendix A

NL Team Premier 1 & NL Club Premier 2 Reschedule Policy & Parameters

A1. Reschedule Policy

- In order for **NL Sunshine** to approve a reschedule request, BOTH teams must agree to the change.
- Teams will have from **July 25th – August 29th** to submit reschedule requests at no cost. Both teams will still be required to agree to a change before any requests are approved.
- After **August 29th**, all reschedule requests will require a \$25 administrative fee. Any requests submitted within 10 days of the original scheduled date will require a \$250 administrative fee.
- Both teams must agree to the new date/time in the GotSport Chat. Once both teams accept the change, the requesting club will be required to submit the Game Change Request via GotSport. **Instructions on how to submit the Game Change Request can be found here:**
<https://support.gotsport.com/how-to-submit-a-game-change-request>
- It is recommended that the team requesting a game to be rescheduled provide at least 3 alternative dates for the match to be changed to.
- Teams will be required to respond to reschedule requests within 48 hours of the message being sent. Teams who do not respond within this timeframe will be subject to a \$100 fine.
- For matches designated as Neutral Site/**NL Sunshine**-Host, requests made after a match is scheduled with a start time and location will incur the \$250 fee.
- For Neutral Site games, the team requesting the reschedule will replay the game at the opponent's fields at a date that is agreed by both teams prior to the request.
- Should a match be cancelled or postponed, both teams must agree on a new date/time/location and submit a reschedule request no later than ten (10) days after the originally scheduled match. Once the reschedule is published, it shall be considered official. If a reschedule request is not submitted by the deadline, the match will be rescheduled by the league.

A2. Scheduling Parameters

- **Scheduling Start Times:**
 - Matches may not begin earlier than 9AM unless both teams agree within the GotSport chat.
- **Scheduling End Times:**
 - Matches on a Saturday may not begin later than 6pm unless both teams agree within the GotSport chat.
 - Matches on a Sunday may not begin later than 4pm unless both teams agree within the GotSport chat.
- **Scheduling Communication**
 - Clubs must communicate with each other prior to entering kickoff times to avoid coaching conflicts.
 - Teams will be required to respond to all requests within 48 hours if the message being sent. Teams who do not respond within this timeframe are subject to a \$100 fine.

Appendix B

NL Club Premier 2 – Sunshine Hosting Standards

B.1 NL Club P2 Hosting Standards

These hosting standards will only be applicable to teams participating in the NL Club Premier 2 – Sunshine Division. Each club will be required to meet the following minimum standards when hosting matches:

- Provide benches for each team
- Ensure fields are safe & properly lined
- Provide corner flags
- Tents must be set up for each team on each field
- Anchored goals with the correct size (24ft W x 8ft H)
- Each club must provide hydration for each field
- Each club must offer a high-quality playing surface with access to backup fields if needed
- All matches must take place at the same location unless otherwise approved by both clubs
- All matches must be scheduled in 2-hour blocks to allow adequate warm-up time

Teams who do not meet these standards are subject to a \$100 fine.

Appendix C

NL Team Premier 1 – Sunshine Hosting Standards

C.1 NL Team P1 Hosting Standards

- Provide benches for each team
- Ensure fields are safe & properly lined
- Provide corner flags
- Anchored goals with the correct size (24ft W x 8ft H)

Teams who do not meet these standards are subject to a \$100 fine.

Appendix D

NL Team Premier 1 – Sunshine Playoff Match Procedures

D.1 National League Playoff Match Procedures

- Unless otherwise specified below, all other National League Rules and NL Sunshine Conference Operating Procedures shall apply.
- In Playoff matches, if the game is tied after regulation, teams will proceed with Penalty kicks in accordance with FIFA “Penalty Shootout.”
- Game Times:

Age Group	Game Length
17-19U	2x45'
15-16U	2x40'
13-14U	2x35'

- Substitutions:

Age Group	Substitution Procedure
13U - 14U	Unlimited over three (3) moments per half + halftime
15U - 19U	Unlimited over four (4) moments per match + halftime

- Player re-entry is allowed during one of the team’s allotted moments.

- Referee Fees

Age Group	Center Ref	Asst Ref	Total Per Team
17-19U	\$100	\$60	\$110
15-16U	\$80	\$55	\$95
13-14U	\$70	\$50	\$85

- Referee fees will be split between the Home/Away teams paid in cash before the match.