



SAAZ Cup Competition Handbook 2024



A US Club Soccer Sanctioned Event

Revised 2/29/2024

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Play Dates & Locations (may change slightly depending on field availability)

Friday, April 12, 2024 - Arizona Athletic Grounds

Saturday, April 13, 2024 - Arizona Athletic Grounds

Sunday, April 14, 2024- Arizona Athletic Grounds

Friday, April 19, 2024 - Copper Sky/Kino Sport Complex

Saturday, April 20, 2024 - Copper Sky/Kino Sport Complex

Sunday, April 21, 2024 - Copper Sky/Kino Sport Complex

Friday, April 22, 2023 - Copper Sky/Kino Sport Complex

Saturday, April 27, 2024 - Bell94 - Community Cup Finals

Sunday, April 28, 2024 - Bell94 - Champions Cup Finals

Rescheduling Games

There will be no Cup rescheduling of games based on club/team requests. SAAZ reserves the right to reschedule games at its discretion.

Communication

- Communication will come from SAAZ League Staff to Club Officials and/or Team Contacts. Please make sure all contact information for the appropriate required officials are updated in the GotSport system.
- **All communication to any SAAZ Staff member regarding a game MUST include the Game # in the subject line of the email.**

Cup Venues

SAAZ Cup games will be held at the stated venues. Cup games are not played in a home/away venue format and will be played at either venue. SAAZ reserves the right to move matches based on field availability.

Parking Fees

Parking fees are determined by each venue, SAAZ does not control parking fees at complexes.

Field Rules

- NO animals of any kind are allowed on the sideline or behind goals at any SAAZ Cup game.
- NO artificial noise makers such as drums, air horns, drones etc. are allowed.
- NO Alcohol
- NO Illegal Drugs
- NO Firearms or Weapons of any kind are allowed at any SAAZ Cup Game.

Competition Rules

Deadlines

- Champions Cup Registration will close at 12:00 midnight, Mar 1, 2024
- **Champions Cup Roster Freeze is at 12:00 midnight, April 7, 2024**
- Community Cup Registration will close at 12:00 midnight, Mar 1, 2024
- **Community Cup Roster Freeze is 12:00 midnight, April 7, 2024**

Player Registration

All Players MUST be registered through GotSport according to US Club Soccer rules with a current US Club player pass card for the club they are playing the Cup with.

US Club Soccer Player Pass cards

All teams must provide their US Club Player pass cards to the match officials prior to each game. If photos are not present on a pass card and/or the pass card is not laminated, the individual will not be eligible for the match.

Only players who are listed on the official SAAZ Event GotSport/Match Report will be eligible to play in SAAZ Cup matches.

Online Check-In Process

All rosters must be completed in GotSport by the Roster Freeze Deadline (April 7, 2024 at 12:00 midnight). At this point, rosters will be locked in GotSport and no more players will be permitted to be added for the event.

PAPERWORK MUST BE UPLOADED TO GOTSPORT ACCOUNT AT THIS TIME

All rosters will be verified and checked-in by SAAZ staff in GotSport to ensure that all teams have players present on them, and that players are eligible. In order to appear on the team's match report, players must have current US Club Soccer pass cards.

Additional players must be lined out on the match report to decrease the team's roster to the correct maximum Game Day Roster allowed for your age group.

As we will be verifying rosters prior to the event, there will be no need to check-in at the facility that you play. Referees will be checking that each team has no more than the max roster amount and that there are NO WRITE IN players on the game card.

Game Day Instructions

- All player jersey numbers must be entered in GotSport by April 7th.
 - GotSport - [How To Enter Jersey Numbers](#)
- Teams do NOT pay referees. Referee Fees are included in the registration fee.
- Benches and tents will be provided, weather permitting.
- Both teams will have player and coach pass cards on-site and ready for the officials prior to the start of the match.
- Home Team chooses the jersey color. Away teams must change jerseys if the referee deems a color conflict.

Pre-Game Field Check In

- Referees will have the match card at the field ready for the game.
- Referees will check-in players using their player pass cards and the match card.
- Referees will be verifying that each team has no more than the max roster amount and that there are NO WRITE IN players on the game card.
- Referees will do an equipment check.

Post-Game

1. Both teams sign the match card and collect their player and coach cards from the referee.
2. Field Marshals will collect match cards and report scores and red cards.

Match Reports

All Match Reports will be distributed and collected by the On-Site Field Marshals before and after every match.

Point System

All SAAZ Cup games shall operate under the following point system:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 0 points for a loss.

Forfeit Scoring

Forfeits will be scored 0-3 against the forfeiting team.

Forfeits, Drops and Fines

Shall a club/team notify the SAAZ League Office with less than a 5 day notice that the team cannot participate in a scheduled Cup match, the team that fails to appear will be responsible for a \$500.00 Fine. The team will also receive a minus point (-1pt) per game forfeited.

Additional Fines may be implemented by the Cup Committee for repeat offenders.

After March 14th the following Refund Policy will apply:

- Any teams dropping after March 1, will forfeit their entry fee.
- If a team drops after the schedule is released, the club will be invoiced a minimum of \$2,000.00 and any other fines deemed appropriate by the Cup Committee.

Ties

- If a Cup pool play game is tied after regulation, the tie stands and will be posted as a tie.
- Elimination round games ending in a tie at the end of regulation will go straight to kicks from the mark.

Tie Breakers

In case of a tie on points in the standings within Cup pool play, the following will be used as tiebreakers:

1. "Head to head" points (win/lose/draw) between teams
2. Overall Goal Differential
3. Goals for
4. Goals against
5. Most shutouts
6. Fewest red cards
7. Penalty Kicks

If more than two teams are tied, tie-breaker #1 does not apply. Start with tie-breaker #2 until a winner is determined. The tie-breaking procedure does not revert to previous criteria if one team is eliminated.

Team Placement

Teams are seeded based on their league placement as of 3/30/2024 and the [SAAZ seeding process](#).

Cup Standings

- Scores and standings are posted in all divisions in both Cups.
- Trophies and Medals are presented to Champions and Finalists in all divisions in both Cups.
- Winners of the U13-U19 Divisions in Champions Cup will qualify directly into US Club Soccer's National Cup Finals in Denver, Colorado this summer.
 - Winners of the U18 and U19 divisions will qualify for a spot in the US Club Soccer National Cup Finals in the combined U18/19 division.
- In the event there are 3 teams or less in an age group, an age group may be a "combined age group division." and is applicable to either cup year after year.

Personnel on the Bench

- A maximum of 4 team officials are allowed in each team's technical area. Team officials must have a current US Club pass card from the Club in which they are coaching in order to sit in the technical area. Team officials in the technical area must be prepared to provide their US Club pass card should a Field Marshal ask for it.
- A coach must have a minimum Grassroots license to coach a game in SAAZ.
- A manager with a current US Club pass card from the Club in which they are may cover for a coach in an emergency situation.

Spectator Seating

- ALL spectators from a team are to sit on the same side of the field as their players.
- Coaches are responsible for the spectators on their team.
- For Cup games, spectators MUST sit on the OPPOSITE side of mid-field from the AR on their side of the field.
- Spectators may NOT sit, stand, watch or record on the sideline that the AR is running.
- Spectators may NOT sit, stand, watch or record behind the goal area.

Click [here](#) for a visual aid on proper team and spectator seating.

Sideline Behavior

SAAZ will not tolerate inappropriate sideline behavior during SAAZ Cup games. On-site SAAZ staff has the authority to remove individual spectators, multiple spectators, and full sidelines or terminate a game if they believe the situation warrants it. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of themselves, their players and their spectators.

Team Roster Limits - See [SAAZ Soccer Guideline Matrix for Roster Details](#)

- ❖ **For 11v11 games:** Only 18 players may be dressed for a match. The 18 players must be on the official Match Report. Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their names on the Match Report or be set as inactive players in GotSport. Any additional player(s) on the bench may not be in uniform.
- ❖ **For 9v9 games:** Only 16 players may be dressed for the match.

Appeals

The referee's decision in all matters related to the field and the game itself shall be final. There shall be no protests of any referee's decisions or game result.

Rosters

Game Roster

Each team must create an official SAAZ Cup event roster in their GotSport account. Only Players who are listed on the official event roster will be eligible to play in Cup matches. If any Player is not listed on the Game Card, he/she must be added electronically to the roster on or up to the published roster freeze date (April 7, 2023 at 9 PM AZ time).

[How to Build an Event Roster - Coach/Manager](#)

Club Pass Players

There is no such thing as a "Club Pass Player" in the Cups. Players may only be rostered to one (1) team in either Cup competition. Therefore, players may not be club-passed. They must be moved to the team they are playing the cup with.

Cup-tied players

Players that are on a roster prior to the roster freeze deadline are **cup-tied** to that team and may not move between teams, or clubs, after that date.

Guest Players

No guest Players (Players with a Player pass from another Club) are allowed to play in Cup games. All players participating in the Cups must be registered in US Club Soccer with the Club they are playing with.

Illegal Players

Any Player who does not appear on the official SAAZ Game Card or have a valid US Club Soccer Player Pass issued by the same Club at the time of the match shall be considered an illegal Player. Any team using, or attempting to use, an illegal Player shall forfeit the game, the Coach of the team using the illegal Player will be suspended from all SAAZ competitions for one year, and the Club will incur a \$500 fine.

Player Transfers

Players are able to transfer to a new team/club and play in the Cups with their new team as long as they are registered with the new club and have a valid US Club pass card. Players will be **cup-tied** and may only be rostered to (1) one team.

Roster Sizes

- **For 11v11 games:** Only 18 players may be dressed for a match. The 18 players must be on the official Match Report. A maximum of 26 players may be listed on the Cup roster.
- **For 9v9 games:** Only 16 players may be dressed for the match. A maximum of 16 players may be listed on the Cup roster.
 - Any players listed on the roster that will not play must have a line through their names on the Match Report or be set as inactive players in GotSport.
 - Any additional player(s) on the bench may not be in uniform.
- In case of an unforeseen roster emergency - Club Directors may submit an appeal to the Cup Committee for an exception to the above roster rules. The Cup Committee and the Technical Committee will evaluate the given situation and approve or deny the appeal.
 - Appeals may only be submitted by the Club Director or Club President.
- **All player jersey numbers must be entered in GotSport by April 7th.**
 - GotSport - [How To Enter Jersey Numbers](#)

Substitutions

Champions Cup

- U11-U14 will have unlimited Substitutions
- U15-U19 will have unlimited substitutions at a maximum of 3 moments per half.
 - Halftime does not count as a moment.
 - Exception to the above as it applies to Goalkeepers (if there is an injury, sickness etc. and a GK is unable to continue, teams can substitute that GK with another GK even if they have already substituted their GK, or out of stoppages or both).
 - Substitution for a possible head injury/concussion does not count as a moment. A team may have used all 3 moments in a match but a potential head injury that may occur may be substituted with a temporary player that does not count as a moment. If the player is cleared to participate in that same half, they may return to play and substitute for the temporary player only.

Community Cup

- U11-U19 Unlimited Substitutions.

Scheduling

- Matches are considered to be at "NEUTRAL SITE" a teams seeding does not designate where the team will play.

In the event of a scheduling conflict, the team will be prepared to play games as scheduled, regardless of whether the head coach is available.

Coach Conflicts

The league will attempt to schedule around game time conflicts for coaches who have multiple teams that are within the Cup competitions, but that no guarantees can be made. Coach Conflicts between SAAZ games will also be avoided if the coach has properly set up using the same coach account and must be the responsibility of the coach to find coverage if they coach more than 2 teams in all events.

Violation of Cup Rules

The SAAZ League Office shall have the authority to suspend, fine, disqualify or otherwise impose sanctions on Players, team officials, or competing Clubs for violating SAAZ Cup Rules, Policies & Code of Ethics, or for any action or conduct not in the best interest of soccer or the Soccer Alliance of Arizona.

Red Cards

If a Red Card is shown, it will result in a minimum one (1) game suspension. This includes a Red Card as a result of two cautions (2 yellow cards). If a Player is sent off during the first game of the weekend, they may not play the next scheduled game for the team in the event. The Player/Coach shall serve the suspension with the team with whom the violation occurred.

Any Player, Coach or team official used during a suspension will be considered ineligible and the team, Coach and Club will be punished accordingly. This includes the forfeiture of any SAAZ Cup games played with the illegal player.

Suspensions

On-site Field Marshals will report any red cards to the SAAZ Cup Director and suspensions will be applied in GotSport in accordance with the Player/Coach Suspension Table.

Note: In general, the suspension to a player/adult will only be served within the competition they receive the suspension. Meaning a player receiving a suspension in a SAAZ Cup event/game must be served in a SAAZ Cup event/game. The suspension does not apply to games outside of SAAZ Cups (i.e. tournaments or other league competitions), unless the suspension was severe (i.e. abuse/assault) where the governing body (US Club Soccer) may impose suspensions across all USSF competitions.

PLAYER SUSPENSION TABLE

Name/Description of Misconduct	Suspension Length	Commentary/ Examples
Serious Foul Play	Two games	Plays on or around the ball that occur within the flow of the game such as slide tackling from behind with disregard for safety of the opposing player and high tackles

Violent Conduct	Two game minimum	Violent Conduct often takes place away from the ball or when the game is stopped
Striking or trying to strike an opponent in the face or above the shoulder area	Three games	For example, elbowing a Player in the face
Severity of the injuries that the sent off player caused to the opponent	Three games	Fouls with such excessive force that a bone is clearly broken
Spitting at an opponent or any other person	Three games	
Denying Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity to Opponent Moving Towards Goal by Offense Punishable with Free Kick or Penalty Kick	One game	
Denying Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity by Deliberately Handling Ball	One game	
Using Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language towards oneself or as an outburst	One game	Cussing at oneself for making a mistake
Using Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language towards an opponent or any other person	Three games	Directing offensive, insulting or abusive language (cussing, but not a racial slur) towards any other person (teammate, opponent, Referee, Coach or spectator)
Using Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language towards an opponent or any other person after being dismissed	Three games	
Using a racial slur towards an opponent or any other person	Three games (minimum) + Discipline	Directing a racial slur at any other person (teammate, opponent, Referee, Coach or spectator)

	committee review	
Using racial slur language towards an opponent or any other person after being dismissed	Three games (minimum) + Discipline committee review	
Approaching the referee crew after the conclusion of the match to insult the referees	Three games	
Approaching the referee in an aggressive manner	Three games	
Receiving Second Caution in Same Match	One game	

COACH/Team Official SUSPENSION TABLE

Name/Description of Misconduct	Suspension Length	Commentary/Examples
Excessive disrespect towards the referee crew by using Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language	Three games (minimum) + discipline committee to review)	

Failure to control the behavior of players	Two games	For example, failing to act to prevent a mass confrontation or fight, failing to stop repeated offenses by the same player
Failure to control the behavior of the spectators	Two games	Asked to assist by a match official and failing to assist that official in controlling a team's spectators
Entering the field without the permission of the referee	Two games	For example, entering the field to argue a call or participate in a physical confrontation
Prior red cards within the previous 12 months	One to two games	
Coaching and instructing players after the dismissal	Two games	This includes providing instruction to the replacement coach by phone or text as well as sitting with spectators and coaching from that location

Coaches and Managers (and other US Club Soccer carded staff members) will serve red card suspension with the team they received the red card. Coaches do not have to serve red card with other teams he/she coaches, unless the coach committed abuse or assault of a referee (which the coach would have to sit out ALL coaching duties until a hearing was held with US Club Soccer). Due to a time discrepancy of when a red card is reported and the Soccer Alliance of Arizona being able to cross the coach off the roster, the coach may have to self-police himself/herself (i.e. if coach gets a red card on Saturday and has game on Sunday).

Game Details Matrix

	U11-U12	U13-U14	U15-U16	U17-U19
Field Size (yds)	70/80 L 45/55 W	100/120 L 55/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W	100/120 L 55/80 W
# of players	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11
Minimum # of players	6	7	7	7
Roster Limits	16	26	26	26

# of players allowed to play each game	16	18	18	18
Playing Time	2x30	2x35	2x40	2x45
Half-Time	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins	10 mins
Ball Size	4	5	5	5
Goal Size (ft)	6.5x18.5- 7x21	8x24	8x24	8x24
Offside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Premier, Classic & Elite Cup and 2010 and younger all levels of Cup Substitutions	At Any Stoppage			
Super Cup 2010 and older Substitutions	3 substitution moments each half per team. Half-time does not count as a moment.			
Free Kick clearance	8 yd	10 yd	10 yd	10 yd
Penalty Kick Distance	10 yds	12 yds	12 yds	12 yds
Heading	No Heading 2012 Heading allowed 2011		YES As per the Laws of the Game	

Playing Rules

All games under league jurisdiction shall be played according to the rules and regulations recognized by the SAAZ which shall be the same rules set by FIFA/U.S. Soccer (USSF) except for those exceptions authorized by FIFA or USSF.

Equipment

1. Player Uniforms

- Opponents must wear colors that distinguish them from each other, and also the Referee and the assistant Referees.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish them from the other Players, the Referee, and the assistant Referees. All Players on a team except the goalkeeper shall wear identical uniforms (shirts, shorts, and socks).
- Each Player on a team shall wear a unique number.** Temporary number alterations are permitted, however, player numbers must be affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. With tape, permanent marker, or some other adhesive. If the temporary alteration falls off/ wears off, it must be re-affixed immediately for the player to continue playing.
- If undershirts or shorts are worn they must match the main color of the jersey or shorts.
- Players must be in official uniform 15 minutes prior to the start of the game.

2. **Game Ball** - If tournament balls are not provided, the home team is the team listed first on the official schedule. The home team will furnish three game balls.
3. **Safety** - A Player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to themselves or another Player.
 - a. **Casts** - No orthopedic (hard) casts, air splints, or metal splints may be worn. Players will be allowed to play in a soft cast at the discretion of the Referee.
 - b. **Jewelry** - Absolutely no jewelry, including rings, chains, watches, jewelry, hair clips, bobby pins, earrings, bracelets, rubber bracelets, or excessively long fingernails may be worn while participating in any SAAZ games. Only Medical Alert Warning Bracelets may be worn and shall be taped to secure them to the Player's body. Earrings and other piercings cannot be taped and must be removed.
 - c. **Shin Guards** - All Players are required to use shin guards at all times. They must be worn properly and be professionally manufactured and unaltered. Socks must completely cover shin guards.
 - d. **Braces** (e.g. knee, elbow) - It is strongly recommended for the safety of the Player, that a Player does not wear a brace during SAAZ games. Braces are allowed as long as the Referee decides that the brace will not or cannot hurt the Player wearing the brace or any other Player. All metal, metal-like, or plastic brace supports are to be properly covered for the duration of the match. Elastic-type supports without any metal, carbon fiber, hard plastic, or like devices are permitted provided the Referee does not deem the support to be potentially harmful to other Players.
 - e. **Eyeglasses** - Players who must wear eyeglasses are encouraged to wear sports goggles. Lenses must be unbreakable and frames must be unbreakable plastic or sturdy metal.

Heading Rule

For U11 (2012) and below, when a Player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a Player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

This rule shall apply to the age groups of U11 (2012) and below. Players who are playing up will play according to the rules of the age group in which they are playing. It is the Club's responsibility to understand the effects of this rule on players playing up.

Head Injury and SCA - No Re-Entry Protocol

In accordance with the CDC and US Club Soccer return to play guidelines, any player removed from the field for a suspected head injury or SCA (sudden cardiac arrest) will not be allowed to return to the field of play unless cleared by a Licensed Healthcare Provider, defined by CA Law AB-379 or AB 2007 as an individual who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions or SCA and is acting within the scope of the provider's practice for evaluation and management of concussions, other head injuries or SCA.