

2024 Summer Cup Competition Rules & Regulations

COMPETITION OVERVIEW:

There are twenty (20) Teams competing in the 2024 Summer Cup, with fourteen (14) from NWSL and six (6) from Liga MX Femenil.

Angel City FC
Bay FC
Chicago Red Stars
Houston Dash
Kansas City Current
NJ/NY Gotham FC
North Carolina Courage
Seattle Reign FC
Orlando Pride
Portland Thorns FC
Racing Louisville FC
San Diego Wave FC
Utah Royals FC
Washington Spirit

Chivas de Guadalajara
Club América
Club Pachuca
Club Tijuana
Rayadas de Monterrey
Tigres UANL

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E
Portland Thorns FC	Angel City FC	Kansas City Current	NJ/NY Gotham FC	Orlando Pride
Seattle Reign FC	San Diego Wave FC	Houston Dash	Washington Spirit	North Carolina Courage
Utah Royals FC	Bay FC	Tigres UANL	Chicago Red Stars	Racing Louisville FC
Club Tijuana	Club América	Club Pachuca	Chivas de Guadalajara	Rayadas de Monterrey

GROUP STAGE:

Each Team plays a total of three group stage games. The group winners will be seeded 1-5 based on total points gained (and applicable tiebreakers) to determine which teams

advance to the Summer Cup Semifinals.

POINT SYSTEM:

Teams will receive three points for a win in regulation, two points for a tie and win in the penalty shoot-out (details below), one point for a tie and loss in the penalty shoot-out, and zero points for a loss in regulation.

In the group stage, if a game is tied at the end of regulation, a penalty shoot-out will be used to determine which club earns one (1) additional point in the group standings. The penalty shoot-out will be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in the IFAB Laws of the Game.

OFFICIALS:

Officials will be assigned by USSF (US Soccer Federation) for games involving Liga MX teams and assigned by PRO (Professional Referee Organization) for games only involving NWSL teams.

There will be four (4) officials assigned to each match, including a center referee, two assistants and a fourth official. Video Assistant Referee (VAR) will not be utilized for Summer Cup.

GAME CLOCK:

Time will be kept per the International Football Association Board Laws of the Game. The official game time for all Games will be managed on the field by the Referee. Allowance is made in either period (first half, second half, and if applicable, first overtime period and second overtime period during Playoff Games) for all lost time through substitutions, assessment and/or removal of injured Players, wasting time, disciplinary sanctions, VAR reviews, medical stoppages permitted by competition rules (e.g., 'hydration' breaks) [which should not exceed one minute], or any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart (e.g., goal celebrations). Allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the Referee. The fourth official indicates the minimum additional time decided by the Referee at the end of the final minute of each half. The additional time may be increased by the Referee but not reduced.

Each stadium must have a permanent, electronic scoreboard that displays Home Team and Visiting Team scores, period, and a game clock. The stadium clock will display the time in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the 2024 NWSL Operations Manual.

For statistical purposes, the minutes for goals, substitutions, yellow cards, etc., will be listed from the first minute until the 90th minute. A goal scored at 15 minutes 10 seconds will be listed as having been scored in the 16th minute. Events occurring during stoppage time are indicated with a "+" sign and the extra minutes in a superscript. For example, a goal scored in the third minute of first half stoppage time is identified as happening at "45+³" (not 48+).

GAME DAY ROSTERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS:

Eighteen (18) to twenty (20) Eligible Players from the Team's official Roster must be selected for the Team's Game Roster. The Property will consider exceptions to this requirement in cases where a player is injured or otherwise becomes unavailable within forty-eight (48) hours of a scheduled match.

Teams are allowed a maximum of five Normal Substitutions per game to be used over the course of three opportunities, excluding half-time and match delays, but including hydration breaks. Any substitutions must be made before the final whistle in order to be eligible for the penalty shoot-out.

The 2024 Summer Cup will participate in "The IFAB Additional Permanent Concussion Substitutions Protocol" which allows one (1) "concussion substitute" per Club, per game following the IFAB guidelines:

A "concussion substitution" may be used regardless of the number of substitutes already used. When a "concussion substitute" is used, the opposing Club then has the option to use an "additional" substitute for any reason. A "concussion substitution" may be made:

- Immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected;
- After an on-field assessment, and/or after an off-field assessment; or
- At any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected (including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play).

Procedure

- If a Club decides to make a 'concussion substitution', the referee/fourth official is informed, by using a pink substitution card.
- The player with concussion or suspected concussion is not permitted to take any further part in the match, including penalties (penalty shoot-out), and should, where possible, be accompanied to the dressing room and/or a medical facility.
- The opposing Club is informed by the referee/fourth official that it has the option of using an 'additional substitute' and an 'additional substitution' opportunity, which may be used concurrently with the 'concussion substitution' made by the other team or at any time thereafter (except as outlined otherwise in the Laws of the Game).

[More information on The IFAB's Concussion Substitution Process are available here at TheIFAB.com](https://www.thelifab.com)

CAUTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS:

If a player or club staff member receives two cautions during two (2) different Tournament games in the group stage, they will automatically be suspended from their club's

subsequent Tournament game. Accumulation suspensions will be served for a second yellow card in the final game of the group stage. Yellow card accumulation will be wiped at the start of the Semifinal round, meaning no accumulation suspensions will be served in the semifinals or final.

If a player or club staff member is sent off as a result of a direct or indirect red card during a Tournament game, they will automatically be suspended from their club's subsequent Tournament game, which may include the Final. Further sanctions may be imposed in the case of a direct red card.

Any red card suspension, direct or indirect, that cannot be served during the 2024 Summer Cup, will not be carried over to the club's next NWSL or Liga MX Femenil Regular Season game, except for severe cases determined by the Disciplinary Committee. Any red card that cannot be served in the 2024 Summer Cup will carry over to the following year's version of the tournament.

Notes on YC Accumulation and Suspensions:

Players who are sent off, having been issued a second caution, are deemed to have been issued a red card. Neither yellow card will count towards the Player's yellow card accumulation.

GAME DELAYS, POSTPONEMENT, AND CANCELLATION PROTOCOL TO DELAY, POSTPONE OR CANCEL A GAME

The Property recognizes that emergencies may arise which make the start or progression of a Game inadvisable or dangerous for participants and spectators. Certain event categories automatically trigger the League Office into an evaluation of whether delay or postponement is necessary, including, but not limited to: 1) the failure of one or both Teams to arrive, (2) a lack of preparedness of one or both Teams to begin or continue playing a Game, (3) serious incident, injury or fatality to a Player, Coach, Official, Team representative or spectator or other medical concern, or (4) unfavorable weather and/or other adverse conditions beyond the control of the participating Teams which would make playing the Game impractical or dangerous for the Players, other participants, or spectators.

POSTPONEMENTS

"Postponement" means not starting a game, or stopping a game's ongoing progression, in order to reschedule the game to be completed on a subsequent date after its originally scheduled date. No Game shall be postponed without the permission of the League Office, unless such postponement is mandated by law enforcement.

TEAM WARM-UP PERIOD FOLLOWING GAME DELAY

Following a Game delay Teams and Players will be permitted a warm-up period. The duration of the warm-up period will be determined by the length of the Game delay:

- A five (5) minute warm-up will be permitted following a game delay of up to ten (10) minutes.
- A ten (10) minute warm-up will be permitted following a game delay between eleven (11) and thirty (30) minutes.
- A fifteen (15) minute warm-up will be permitted following a game delay between thirty-one (31) and sixty (60) minutes.
- A twenty (20) minute warm-up will be permitted following a game delay of greater than sixty (60) minutes

These guidelines set forth a maximum duration for warm-ups. The Referee, with the mutual approval of the Head Coach from each competing Team, may designate a warm-up period shorter than the above guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR RESUMING A GAME

When resuming a Game that has been delayed or postponed, play will continue at the exact time at which it was stopped and the Referee will utilize the appropriate restart. If the Game is stopped at a dead-ball situation, it will resume by allowing the appropriate Team to take the restart they were awarded before play was suspended (e.g., throw-in, goal kick, etc.). If the Game is stopped during the run of play, it will resume with a dropped ball at the location on the field where the ball was positioned when the game was suspended.

LIGHTNING AND SEVERE WEATHER:

Given the likelihood of lightning during the League season, and the potential for personal injury and structural damage, each Home Team must have a detailed weather delay plan. These plans must be developed in coordination with the venue. The established plans must include the following:

1. Specific persons in charge of decision-making (one management level person from the stadium, one person from the Home Team, one person from law enforcement).
2. Direct contact with the U.S. Weather Bureau and/or Doppler radar.
3. A minimum distance threshold for a storm in order to delay and re-start the Game.
4. A severe weather tracking system to utilize.
5. Formation of a weather delay committee with pre-designated meeting location (and back-up location) that includes the Referee, Team representatives and the stadium staff to meet to discuss the weather delay.
6. Immediate and consistent contact with the League's Game Notice designee
7. Prepared statements that can be used as updates to spectators and media via PA announcement (and video if available)

8. Designation of shelter locations or evacuation plans for those in the venue in the event of severe weather.
9. Teams whose areas run the risk of receiving snow during the season must develop a snow removal plan, including sufficient staff to manage snow removal in a timely manner.
10. Submission of the venue curfew.
11. "Standing Orders" (procedures) published and posted to accomplish the above.

In the case of thunderstorms and lightning, play can generally resume after the storm has passed.

INCOMPLETE GAME

In the event a game cannot be completed, the game counts if forty-five minutes (45:00) (excluding stoppage time) were played. If any Game is suspended prior to the completion of forty-five minutes (45:00) (excluding stoppage time), due to inclement weather or extenuating circumstances, it will resume at a date/time agreed to by the competing Teams in consultation with the Property and will start in the same minute in which the game was postponed.

Every effort must be made to resume the game within the next twenty-four (24) hours following cessation of play. If the game is resumed after the 24-hour period has passed, both Teams may have a maximum of three (3) changes to their official Game Roster. Any changes to the lineup on the field, after any of the three (3) changes to the official Game Roster are made, count towards the substitution allotment.

The Property reserves the right to declare a full replay at its discretion in order to protect the integrity of the competition.

HYDRATION BREAKS:

The match referee reserves the right to implement hydration breaks during matches to hydrate during extremely hot or humid weather conditions. Teams are required to have a wet bulb globe thermometer, which must be used to determine whether hydration breaks are to be implemented. The following process shall be used to determine whether hydration breaks should be implemented by the match referee:

Pre-Game and Halftime Decision Making Process

The wet bulb globe temperature reading will be required for every League match.

The League shall mandate the use of hydration breaks if the wet bulb globe temperature measures 82 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

The Referee can, at any time, implement a discretionary hydration break in cases in which player safety is determined to be at risk.

The Fourth Official, with the assistance of the Home and Visiting Team Athletic Trainer, will be responsible for reading the WBGT at the kickoff spot at the conclusion of the pre-match warmup and after the whistle blows for the end of the first half.

The option to employ a hydration break should be confirmed by the Referee to a member of each Club's technical staff after each WBGT reading.

Any onsite questions should be directed to the game day officials.

Implementation and control of the breaks will be managed solely by the Referee.

Implementation

Two (2) separate WBGT readings will take place during the match:

- i. The first reading will take place immediately after the conclusion of pre-match warmups have concluded.
 - a. If the WBGT measurement meets or exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit, there will be a mandatory hydration break near the 30th and 75th minutes respectively.
 - b. If the WBGT measurement does not meet 82 degrees Fahrenheit, there will not be a mandatory hydration break at the 30th minute.
- ii. The second reading will take place immediately after the Referee signals the end of the first half.
 - a. If the WBGT measurement meets or exceeds 82 degrees Fahrenheit, there will be a mandatory hydration break near the 75th minute.
- iii. Each break will last no more than one (1) minute in length.
- iv. If the WBGT drops by at least ten (10) degrees (72 degrees Fahrenheit or below) prior to the 30th or 75th minute, the Referee will have the ability to nullify the mandatory hydration break.
 - a. The Fourth Official will be responsible for the reading of the temperature near the 30th and 75th minute respectively in cases where the WBGT may drop by at least ten (10) degrees.
- v. Additionally, the Referee will still be able to impose a "discretionary" hydration break(s) if they believe there is a risk to player safety even if the WBGT reading does not reach 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

The ball must be out of play for the hydration break to commence. The Referee will signal for the start of the break and inform both Clubs and all match Officials. The clock will continue to run and all time allotted for the break will be added to stoppage time. Both Clubs will go to their respective Club bench areas.

- i. Player must remain on the field of play.
- ii. Coaches cannot leave their respective technical areas.

- iii. Bench personnel cannot enter the field of play (excluding medical personnel). Entering the field of play during a hydration break is subject to sanctions.

EXTREME HEAT POLICY:

Extreme Heat – Reporting

If, in conjunction with the air temperature being at or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, the National Weather Service issued an Extreme Heat Warning or Watch or a Heat Advisory, all WBGT readings, even if they are below the threshold, must be reported into the League office by the home Team's operations staff. The League will notify key contacts of WBGT readings.

Extreme Heat – Match Delay Procedures

The Referee will add a third WBGT measurement if the anticipated high air temperature of the day is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above. The first WBGT measurement will occur approximately 60 minutes prior to the start of the match at the kickoff spot.

- i. If the WBGT temperature reads at or above 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit, the home club's operations staff is required to alert the League.
 - a) The League will disseminate the information to all appropriate parties.
 - b) The Fourth Official will take a second WBGT measurement 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the match (approximately right before player warm-ups).
 - If the WBGT temperature reads below 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit, warm-ups may begin.
 - If the WBGT temperature reads at or above 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit, the home club operations staff will alert the League and the match will officially go into a delay.

During the Delay

- a. Similar to a severe weather delay, the match will not start or resume until it is safe to do so as outlined by the procedures below.
- b. The Fourth Official will take another WBGT measurement 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the match. Follow the same procedure as above, should the WBGT reading meet or exceed 95 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - If the WBGT temperature reads below 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit, warm-ups may begin.
- c. Following the reading 15 minutes prior to the start of the match, should the delay continue, a WBGT measurement will be taken every 30 minutes at the kickoff spot, until it is deemed safe to play, below 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit, or until such time has passed that the League decides to postpone the match.
 - In the event a WBGT measurement is below the 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit threshold by 1 degree (i.e., 91.3 degrees Fahrenheit), it will be the Fourth Official in conjunction with the home club's Team Physician with feedback from visiting

team medical personnel, operations, officials and both technical staffs, to make the ultimate decision if and when play is allowed to resume.

- ii. The Referees will take the second WBGT reading immediately after the conclusion of pre-match warmups. Follow the same procedures as above should the WBGT reading meet or exceed 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit.
- iii. The referees will take the third WBGT reading immediately following the referee's whistle to end the 1st half of play. Again, follow the same procedures as above should the WBGT measurement meet or exceed 92.3 degrees Fahrenheit.

DEFINITIONS

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature: A measure of heat stress in direct sunlight which takes into account air temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover (solar radiation). This measurement differs from the Heat Index, which is an adjusted air temperature taking into account air temperature and humidity – i.e., what it “feels” like.

National Weather Service: An Agency of the United States government that is tasked with providing weather forecasts, warnings of hazardous weather, and other weather-related products to organizations and the public, for the purposes of protection, safety, and general information.

Excessive Heat Warning: An Excessive Heat Warning is a warning issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions when the maximum heat index is expected to be 105°F or higher for at least 2 days and the nighttime air temperature will not drop below 75° F. These criteria vary across North America.

Excessive Heat Watch: An Excessive Heat Watch is issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24-72 hours. A watch is used when the risk of a heat wave has increased; but its occurrence and timing are still uncertain.

Heat Advisory: A Heat Advisory is issued within 12 hours of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The advisory is issued when the maximum heat index temperature is expected to be 100°F or higher for at least 2 days and the nighttime air temperatures will not drop below 75° F (37.8° C). These criteria vary across North America.

SUMMER CUP PLAYOFFS:
Single-Elimination Format

WHO QUALIFIES:

The semifinals will be comprised of the top four (4) Clubs from the five (5) group winners (i.e., Clubs must first win their group to qualify). In the event two (2) or more Clubs are even on points, tiebreakers will be employed to determine standings.

The seeding for the top four (4) point winners of the five (5) Group winners will be as follows:

- Top Point Winner vs Fourth Place Point Winner
- Second Place Point Winner vs Third Place Point Winner

If the score is tied after 90 minutes of play in any Semifinal or Final game, a penalty shoot-out will be conducted to determine a winner.

TEAM-STANDINGS TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURES:

There will be separate tie-breaking procedures for both intra and inter group tiebreakers for the 2024 Summer Cup, both outlined below:

Intra-Group: The Team awarded the highest position in each group will be the Team with the greatest number of points. In the event that two or more Teams finish the Group Stage with an equal number of points, the following system will be used to break the tie:

1. Goal Differential in all group play games;
2. Most goals scored in all group play games;
3. Most points obtained in the group games between the tied clubs;
4. Goal differential from the group games between the tied clubs;
5. Most goals scored in all group games between the tied clubs;
6. Least Disciplinary Points Accumulated
 - a. Yellow card: 1 point
 - b. Indirect red card (as a result of two (2) yellow cards): 3 points
 - c. Direct red card: 4 points
 - d. Yellow card and direct red card: 5 points
 - i. Only one of the above point totals shall be applied to a Player/Coach in a single Game.
 - e. Drawing of lots by NWSL x Liga MX Femenil

NOTE: Each step in the tiebreaker process will fully determine standings (assuming no ties). For example, if Teams A, B, C, and D tie on points, and Team A has a goal differential of +5, Team B is +3, Team C is +3 and Team D is +1, the standings will be 1st Team A and 4th Team D. With Teams B and C still tied, they would move to the next Tiebreaker (most goals), which would settle which of B and C is ranked 2nd and 3rd.

Inter-Group: The Team awarded the highest position seed of the Summer Cup group winners will be the Team with the greatest number of points. In the event that two or more Teams finish the Group Stage with an equal number of points, the following system will be used to break the seeding ties:

1. Goal Differential in all group play games;
2. Most goals scored in all group play games;
3. Least disciplinary points accumulated:

- a. Yellow card: 1 point
- b. Indirect red card (as a result of two (2) yellow cards): 3 points
- c. Direct red card: 4 points
- d. Yellow card and direct red card: 5 points
 - i. Only one of the above point totals shall be applied to a Player/Coach in a single Game.
- e. Drawing of lots by NWSL x Liga MX Femenil

NOTE: Each step in the tiebreaker process will fully determine seeding (assuming no ties). For example, if Teams A, B, C, and D tie on points, and Team A has a goal differential of +5, Team B is +3, Team C is +3 and Team D is +1, the standings will be 1st Team A and 4th Team D. With Teams B and C still tied, they would move to the next Tiebreaker (most goals), which would settle which of B and C is ranked 2nd and 3rd.

