



5-a-SIDE SOCCER COMPETITION RULEBOOK

This rulebook sets out the competition format and operating rules for the Soccer Competition at the Maccabi Junior Games 2026. All players, parents/guardians, coaches and spectators are expected to familiarise themselves with these rules before the event.

1. COMPETITION & AGE CATEGORIES

- Soccer is a 5-a-side team competition.
- Age is determined by the age the player turns at any point during the 2026 calendar year.
- Players may only play for the age group and squad to which they are registered.
- Playing outside a registered age group or squad may result in forfeiture of the match or matches involved.
- Only registered players within the squad may take part. No unregistered player may take the field.

CATEGORY	AGES IN 2026
U10	9 & 10
U12	11 & 12
U14	13 & 14
U16	15 & 16
U18	17 & 18

- A minimum of 4 teams must be entered in an age group for that age group to be considered viable and proceed.
- Players may wear their own matching team kit. Where a team's kit is not uniform/matching or clashes with the opponent's, bibs will be provided.

2. PITCH, BALL & EQUIPMENT

- Standard FIFA Laws of the Game apply, subject to these tournament-specific rules.
- Matches will be played on a small-sided pitch marked with a clear halfway line.
- Ball size by age group:
 - U10 & U12: Size 4
 - U14, U16 & U18: Size 5
- Shin guards are compulsory for all players.

- No jewellery may be worn during play.
- Goalkeepers must wear a shirt or bib distinguishing them from outfield players.
- Goals will be ¾-size goals, equivalent to those used for U11/U12 club soccer.
- Goalkeepers play a prominent and important role in this format given the reduced goal size.

3. RULES OF PLAY

- Games are one-way, with no second half swap of ends, unless stated otherwise on the day.
- Standard FIFA scoring rules apply. A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar.
- No offside rule applies.
- Standard throw-ins apply when the ball goes out of play. Kick-ins are not used.
- A goalkeeper may not pick up the ball with their hands from a deliberate back pass from a teammate's foot and must play the ball with their feet.
- Standard FIFA rules apply to goal kicks, corners, fouls and free kicks.
- Standard FIFA kick-off rules apply to start the game and after each goal.

4. SQUADS, SUBSTITUTIONS & SIDELINES

- Squad size is up to 7 players per team.
- Five players are on the field at any one time.
- Up to 2 rolling substitutes are permitted per team.
- Substitutes may be made at any stoppage, subject to the substitution procedure.
- The player coming off must be fully off the field of play before the substitute enters.
- An infringement where a substitute enters before the outgoing player has left may result in a yellow card and/or time penalty at the referee's discretion.
- One adult per team is permitted on the sideline to coach and manage substitutions.
- The designated adult must remain off the field of play at all times.
- Spectators and coaches must remain behind marked boundary lines.

5. MATCH TIMING, SCHEDULING & FORFEITS

- Match length will be 10–15 minutes per game. The exact duration will be set by the organisers based on the number of teams entered and confirmed before play begins.
- Turnaround between matches will be approximately 2–5 minutes from the final whistle of one game to kick-off of the next.
- Teams must be on the field and ready at the scheduled kick-off/whistle time.
- Teams are encouraged to arrive at their pitch at least 5 minutes before their scheduled kick-off to avoid forfeiture.
- Any team not on the field when the game is started and the whistle is blown forfeits the match.

- A forfeited match is recorded as a 5–0 loss, with the opponent awarded the win.
- The Tournament Director has final discretion over forfeits where there are genuine extenuating circumstances.

6. TOURNAMENT FORMAT, POINTS & KNOCKOUTS

- One group: all teams play each other in a single group. The top 4 teams progress to the semi-finals, followed by the final and a 3rd/4th place playoff.
- Single-group semi-final seeding:
 - 1st vs 4th
 - 2nd vs 3rd
- Two groups: the top 2 teams from each group progress to the semi-finals.
- Cross-group semi-final seeding:
 - Group A 1st vs Group B 2nd
 - Group B 1st vs Group A 2nd
- More than two groups: a quarter-final round may be introduced.
- A 3rd/4th place playoff will be held in addition to the final where applicable.
- The final competition format and seeding will be determined by the Tournament Director based on final entry numbers.

POINTS SYSTEM: WIN = 3 | DRAW = 1 | LOSS = 0

- For a forfeit, the opponent is awarded the win and a 5–0 scoreline.
- Group/league standings are determined by:
 - Points
 - Head-to-head result
 - Goal difference
 - Goals scored
 - Coin toss or another committee-determined method
- For knockout matches that are level after normal time, extra time of up to 5 minutes will be played.
- Extra time is sudden death: the first goal scored wins the match.
- If no goal is scored during the 5 minutes of sudden-death extra time, the match is decided by penalty kicks.
- Each team will take 3 penalties.
- If the score remains level after 3 penalties each, sudden-death penalties will be taken, with one kick per team per round until a winner is decided.

7. DISCIPLINE, WELFARE & CONDUCT

- A yellow card is a caution recorded against the player.
- Two yellow cards in the same match result in a red card, equivalent to the standard FIFA procedure, and a 1-match suspension.
- A red-carded player is sent off immediately and cannot be replaced. The team plays the remainder of the match a player short.

- A red-carded player receives a 1-match suspension for their team's next fixture.
- Improper substitution may result in a yellow card and/or time penalty at the referee's discretion.
- Serious misconduct, including violent conduct or abuse of officials, may result in an extended suspension or disqualification of a player or team from the event.
- Any coach or sideline adult who interferes with play or is deemed by the referee or organising committee to be unsettling a game through abuse, dissent or disruptive behaviour may be removed from the game and asked to leave the venue.
- Zero tolerance applies to abuse toward referees, coaches, opposition players or spectators. Such behaviour may result in immediate dismissal from the event at the discretion of the organising committee.
- Any player who is bleeding or has an open wound must leave the field for treatment and may re-enter once safely dressed. A rolling substitution may cover this period.
- Play will be stopped for any serious injury. First aid support should be available pitch-side for the duration of the event.
- In the event of unsafe weather or playing conditions, the Tournament Director may delay, shorten or abandon matches.
- Where a match is abandoned before completion, the Tournament Director will determine the result, including whether the score at the time of stoppage stands, the match is replayed or the result is void.
- Spectators and coaches must remain off the field and behind marked boundary lines at all times.

8. OFFICIALS, DISPUTES, MEDALS & FINAL AUTHORITY

- Referee decisions are final on the day.
- Any formal dispute regarding referee decisions must not be raised with the referee during play.
- Formal protests regarding eligibility or administration must be lodged with the Tournament Director in writing within the timeframe set by the organising committee on the day.
- Administrative concerns involving scheduling, eligibility, discipline, safety or tournament structure should be referred to the Tournament Director.
- Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded according to the final placings in each eligible age category under the approved competition structure.
- The organising committee's decision is final on all matters not explicitly covered in this rulebook.
- The rules may be clarified or adjusted by the organising committee prior to the start of competition where required.
- Any changes will be communicated to team managers before Round 1.
- The Tournament Director has final authority over scheduling, eligibility, competition format, discipline, weather and playing conditions, disputes and any matter not specifically covered by these rules.