





**Homeschool Soccer Tournament** 

# **Rules & Regulations**

# **Opening Statement**

While this document outlines rules, expectations, and structures to support the Indiana Crossroads Invitational, its ultimate purpose is to preserve the integrity and joy of homeschool sports. These guidelines exist to protect the opportunity for homeschooled athletes to compete honorably, and for teams to build community and character through sport.

We recognize that competitive drive is a natural and celebrated part of athletics, but that drive must never come at the cost of fairness, sportsmanship, or the heart behind these efforts. If you find yourself wondering whether a decision is technically allowed or how to stretch one of these rules, we encourage you to step back and ask what reflects the spirit of this Invitational.

Asking questions or seeking clarity before making decisions is not only encouraged, it's appreciated. We look forward to making this a joyful, memorable experience along with you for all of our teams, players, and families.

#### **Section 1: Mission Statement**

The **Indiana Crossroads Invitational** exists to provide homeschool athletes with a Christ-centered, competitive soccer experience rooted in faith, integrity, fostering skill development, and lasting relationships, while glorifying God through sportsmanship, teamwork, and a Christ-like spirit in every interaction on and off the field.

# **Section 2: Player Eligibility**

# 2.1 Homeschool Designation

The Indiana Crossroads Invitational defines homeschooling as an educational approach where parents or legal guardians take primary responsibility for directing their child's education, typically conducted at home. Parents or legal guardians oversee their child's education by making key decisions, including:

- 1. Selecting and approving curriculum, course materials, and study schedules.
- 2. Providing instruction or selecting tutors, co-ops, teachers, or dual enrollment options.
- 3. Managing graduation requirements and overall educational goals.

Parents or legal guardians must maintain primary responsibility for their child's education, even when utilizing additional resources or external support. This ensures that parents or legal guardians remain directly involved in their child's learning, fulfilling the role of headmaster or primary educational authority. Players must be considered a homeschool student prior to their first regular season game and must remain continuously homeschooled through the remainder of the season leading up to the first day of the Invitational to be eligible.

# 2.2 Player Registration Requirements

During the regular season, each program participating in the Indiana Crossroads Invitational must ensure that its registration process includes an attestation by the parent or legal guardian confirming that the student-athlete is a homeschool student. This means the student's education is parent-directed, primarily conducted at home, and aligns with the homeschool designation criteria outlined by the Indiana Crossroads Invitational. By registering a team, the program confirms that parents or guardians have made this attestation during their registration process.

#### 2.3 Club Membership and Participation

Players must be eligible members of their respective program and must have dressed for at least 50% of their team's regular season games to be eligible to play in the Indiana Crossroads Invitational.

### 2.4 Gender Eligibility

Female players are eligible to play in all divisions. Male players are eligible to play in all divisions except those designated as Girls-specific divisions. Player gender is determined by the gender recorded on their original birth certificate.

#### 2.5 Player Ineligibility

If any player is determined to be ineligible by the Invitational Committee, the player will not be allowed to participate in the Indiana Crossroads Invitational. Any tournament games in which the ineligible player participated may require forfeiture, as decided by the Invitational Committee. The player and/or their team may also face suspension from future participation in the Indiana Crossroads Invitational.

### 2.6 Graduation and Age Requirements

Student-athletes who have formally graduated from high school, participated in a high school graduation ceremony, or completed their entire high school course of study are no longer eligible to participate in the

Indiana Crossroads Invitational, regardless of age. Each student-athlete is allowed a maximum of six years of eligibility to participate on a 19U division roster. All players must meet the following age requirements as of the first day of the Indiana Crossroads Invitational:

- 2.6.1 Players in the 19U Division must be at least 13 years old and no older than 19 years.
- 2.6.2 Players in the 14U Division must be 14 years old or younger.
- 2.6.3 Players in the 11U Division must be at least 8 years old and no older than 11 years.

Note: Multiple competitive subdivisions (e.g., Gold, Silver, Bronze) may exist within each age division. Age eligibility applies uniformly across all subdivisions.

# Section 3: Team Eligibility

# 3.1 Division Participation

Players who start and log more than 50% of minutes for a respective team are not permitted to play in a lower division, regardless of their age qualifications. Programs with two teams in the same division must lock their players to a single team roster no later than September 1.

# 3.2 Multi-Team Participation

Players may participate on multiple team rosters within the same organization during the Indiana Crossroads Invitational, provided they meet the age qualifications for each respective team.

#### 3.3 Roster Size

Teams may have a maximum roster of 24 players.

#### 3.4 Eligibility Approval

Teams must meet all eligibility requirements and receive approval from the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee to participate.

#### 3.5 Roster Submission Deadline

Each team must submit its complete roster to the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee no later than September 1. Only players listed on the submitted roster will be eligible to participate, unless a change is subsequently approved by the Committee.

# 3.6 Required Roster Information

The roster submission must include the team name, player first and last names, jersey numbers, birth month/year of each player, dual roster status, and exemption status. This information ensures accurate eligibility tracking and seeding for the event.

#### 3.7 Roster Changes

Any changes to a team's roster after initial submission must be submitted in writing to the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee. All change requests must be received and approved no later than 14 days before the first day of the Invitational. Changes requested after this deadline may be denied unless due to injury or hardship, and approval will be at the sole discretion of the Committee.

### 3.8 Player Jersey Numbers

Players must wear their assigned jersey number as designated in the team's roster submission unless disclosed to the opposing team prior to the match with the player's parent or legal guardian present during the disclosure. Players are only allowed to change jerseys in the middle of a match if their jersey becomes compromised (e.g., torn or heavily soiled) and must disclose the change to a game official.

### Section 4: Exceptions and Hardships

#### 4.1 Committee Review Process

All requests for exceptions or hardships must be submitted in writing to the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee no later than September 1. Programs are strongly encouraged to submit requests well in advance of this deadline to allow sufficient time for review and follow-up if needed. Eligibility or hardship exceptions must be approved before a player or team participates in any Indiana Crossroads Invitational match. The Committee will evaluate each request on a case-by-case basis and notify the team or player of the decision within 7 days of submission.

# 4.2 Player Eligibility Exceptions

Exceptions to player eligibility requirements (e.g., homeschool designation, age limits) may be granted in rare circumstances where significant hardship can be demonstrated. Documentation supporting the request (e.g., proof of unique circumstances, letters from program officials) must accompany the submission. Each team is permitted up to two roster positions for student-athletes whose homeschool designation may be unclear or who attend a school that does not offer the sport of soccer. This ensures alignment with the Invitational's commitment to homeschool-focused competition while allowing flexibility for unique circumstances. These two roster positions must be submitted in accordance with section 4.1.

#### 4.3 Final Authority

Decisions regarding exceptions and hardships are made solely by the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee and are considered final. Appeals may only be submitted in the case of new evidence or circumstances not originally presented in the request.

# **Section 5: Player and Coach Behavior**

#### 5.1 Code of Conduct

All players and coaches participating in the Indiana Crossroads Invitational are expected to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship, integrity, and respect both on and off the field. Any behavior that undermines the values of the Invitational may result in disciplinary action. Sportsmanship is always encouraged by all parties, including players, coaches, parents, and spectators.

# 5.2 Respect for Officials and Opponents

5.2.1 Players and coaches must show respect toward referees, opposing players, coaches, and spectators at all times.

5.2.2 Altercations with referees will not be tolerated and may result in future disciplinary measures, including warnings or suspensions.

#### 5.3 Prohibited Behavior

- 5.3.1 The use of offensive, discriminatory, or abusive language or gestures is strictly prohibited.
- 5.3.2 Physical altercations, whether intentional or retaliatory, may result in immediate removal from the game and possible suspension for the remainder of the Invitational.
- 5.3.3 Coaches, team representatives, and program volunteers must not incite or encourage unsportsmanlike behavior among players, spectators, or others involved in the game.
- 5.3.4 Coaches, parents, or adults are strictly prohibited from correcting or confronting the opposing team's players, fans, or children at any time. Concerns must be directed to the team's coach or officials.

### 5.4 Responsibilities of Coaches

- 5.4.1 Coaches are responsible for modeling good sportsmanship and ensuring their players adhere to Invitational rules and conduct standards.
- 5.4.2 Coaches must address any issues of player misconduct immediately and report them to the Invitational Committee if necessary.
- 5.4.3 Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their team's parents and/or fans during games. Any disruptive, unsportsmanlike, or abusive behavior from parents or fans must be managed by the coach, athletic director, or program president promptly. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the team.

# 5.5 Disciplinary Action

5.5.1 The Invitational Committee reserves the right to impose disciplinary actions, including warnings, game suspensions, team forfeitures, and disqualifications, based on the severity of the behavior.
5.5.2 Appeals for disciplinary decisions must be submitted in writing to the Invitational Committee within 8 hours of the incident for review.

# **Section 6: Tournament Format and Seeding**

### 6.1 Coed Teams

Coed teams are not eligible to participate in any Girls-only divisions.

### 6.2 Pre-Invitational Seeding

Teams will be seeded based on their regular season record, strength of schedule, and overall roster competitiveness, as determined by the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee. Seeding is designed to be fair and to ensure balanced competition throughout the event. While teams may indicate a preferred division during registration, final placement is determined solely by the Committee and is not guaranteed.

### 6.3 Divisions and Structure

Within each age division, the Indiana Crossroads Invitational may include multiple levels of competition

within both the Boys and Girls categories, depending on the number of participating teams. Final division structure will be determined once registration and seeding evaluations are complete.

#### 6.4 Match Guarantee and Schedule

Each team will be scheduled to play a minimum of three (3) games, weather permitting, with no more than two (2) games scheduled in a single day.

# 6.5 Pool Play and Seeding for Playoffs

Results from pool play will be used to determine seeding for elimination playoff brackets. Teams will be ranked within their pools based on the total number of points accumulated.

# 6.6 Forfeits in Pool or Round Robin Play

A forfeited pool or round robin match will be scored as a 3-0 victory for the team receiving the forfeit.

#### 6.7 Pool Play Scoring System

Teams will earn points during pool play as follows:

- 3 points for a win
- 1 point for a tie
- 1 point for a shutout (including 0-0 ties)
- 1 point per goal scored, up to a maximum of 3 points per game

# 6.8 Pool Play Tie Breaker System

In the event of a tie in pool standings, the following criteria will be applied in order until the tie is resolved:

- Head-to-head result
- 2. Goal differential (maximum of 3 goals per game)
- 3. Fewest goals allowed
- 4. Most goals scored (maximum of 3 per game)
- 5. Penalty kick shootout (scheduled no later than 45 minutes prior to the affected playoff game) *Note: Any disqualifications from the previous match will remain in effect for the shootout.*

# 6.9 Cross Pool Tie Breaker System

When cross-pool comparison is required, tie breaker criteria 2 through 5 from Section 6.8 will be used to determine advancement or seeding.

# 6.10 Playoff Group Seeding Tie Breaker

For ties within a playoff bracket group, seeding will be determined using criteria 2 through 4 from Section 6.8. If a tie still remains, pre-Indiana Crossroads Invitational seeding will be used as the final determinant.

#### 6.11 Sub-Divisional Playoffs

In divisions with multiple pools, teams may be separated into appropriate playoff brackets based on final pool standings. The number and structure of playoff brackets will be determined by the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee based on total team entries and pool results, ensuring a fair and competitive experience for all participating teams.

### 6.12 Playoff Tie Game Procedure

Playoff matches that end in a tie will follow the Indiana Crossroads Invitational's official tie game procedure, which includes a penalty shootout if necessary to determine a winner.

# 6.13 Weather Delays and Lightning Protocol

In the event that thunder is heard or lightning is observed by officials or the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee, all play will be suspended immediately in accordance with NFHS lightning safety guidelines. Participants will be directed to seek shelter in a safe location such as a vehicle or building. Play may not resume until at least 30 minutes have passed since the last observation of thunder or lightning.

# 6.14 Safety and Scheduling Adjustments

In the event of inclement weather, unsafe field conditions, or other unforeseen disruptions, the Indiana Crossroads Invitational Committee reserves the authority to take any of the following actions:

- Relocate or reschedule games
- Modify the length or structure of games
- Cancel preliminary games or reduce the number of scheduled games
- Revise the playoff advancement format as necessary

# 6.15 Suspended Games

If a game is suspended before the end of the first half, every effort will be made to reschedule the match if it impacts tournament advancement. If rescheduled, the match will resume from the point of suspension, maintaining the same score and time remaining.

### 6.16 Cancelled Games

If a game is terminated after the completion of the first half, it will be considered official, and the score at the time of termination will stand as final.