



NL Mid South 2025-26 OPERATING PROCEDURES (as of July 2025)

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the National League Rules for Team-based Leagues, the NL Mid South 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 I - Mid South.

Review the NL rules for team-based leagues [HERE](#), which is applicable to every NL Team-Based League around the country.

The Premier II Division, as a designated 2nd tier competition within the Conference, shall abide by these Operating Procedures unless otherwise as noted

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SECTION 1. TEAM INFORMATION

1.01 Registration System / Application Process

Squadi shall be the official team application/registration system. Any eligible team must register their team using Squadi. No registrations will be received or accepted in any other system.

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

1.02 Application Deadlines

Application deadlines are subject to change. For the 2025/26 season of the NL Mid South, the application deadlines are:

14U-19U Registration Deadline: **July 18, 2025**

13U Registration Deadline: **December 19, 2025**

1.03 Fees and Other Expenses

The Team Entry Fee is subject to change. For the 2025/26 NL Mid South season, the team entry fee is \$1050 per team for Premier I and \$775 for Premier II and is non-refundable if a team is accepted and later drops out. State Associations may charge an additional fee to cover additional costs associated with the operation of the league.

The Team Entry Fee does not include the Squadi deposit fee (\$20), the 3.5% credit card fee, or Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with the Referee Section (Section 7) of the document. The Team Entry Fee must be paid directly to USYS following acceptance.

1.03.1 Payment of Fines

Any team that is subject to a league fine(s) must pay such fine(s) immediately upon notification from League officials. A team will receive a written email notification from the League of such fines. Any team failing to pay fines imposed on their team may result in such team being suspended from the league for subsequent years. Any club with a team that is suspended shall receive a warning to their club. If repeated team fines are not paid from said club, the warned club may have all teams suspended from the League for subsequent years. All league fines will be issued and payable in Squadi. Additional late fees will be added if fine invoices are not paid by the due date. Due dates will be provided when the fine is invoiced through Squadi.

SECTION 2. LEAGUE STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATION

2.01 Structure

The 2025-26 season 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 (18U/19U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later

Within the Conference there are two (2) tiers of competition:

- 1) Premier I (Tier 1), which includes up to 10 teams in each gender age group from the State Associations of Alabama (AL), Arkansas (AR), Louisiana (LA), Mississippi (MS), and Tennessee (TN)

- 2) Premier II (Tier 2), which includes teams from: AL, AR, MS LA, and TN. Teams will play a single round-robin within each gender age group unless there are fewer than 5 teams, in which case will play a double round-robin

2.02 Qualification for 2026-27: Premier I Division

The NL Mid South will qualify teams into Premier I for the 2026-27 NL Mid South season using the following criteria. The Team Selection Group shall have the final determination on the number of teams in a gender age group.

- The two (2) highest finishing teams in each 13U-17U Premier I gender age group, according to the standings of the 2025-26 NL Mid South season, shall automatically qualify for their rising gender age group in their 2026-27 Conference.
- The top finishing team in each 13U-17U gender age group of the 2025-26 Premier II Division will be strongly considered for an Open Slot position in their rising gender age group of the 2026-27 NL Mid South Premier I.
- Any team may apply for a remaining Open Slot (up to 12) and will be filled at the discretion of the League Manager, in consultation with the NL Management Group.
- The 13U gender age group will be filled by Open Team Application, with review and acceptance by the Team Selection Group. The top team in the 13U Premier II fall division will be strongly considered for an Open Slot position for the spring 13U Premier I division. Team Selection Group shall have the final determination of acceptance and volume of teams in the NL Mid South.

In situations whereby a team does not apply for participation for a season where such a team had previously qualified as a Premier I division team, such slot may be filled at the discretion of the Team Selection Group.

2.03 Qualification for 2026-27: Premier II Division

The League Manager shall determine the number of teams in each gender age group. Clubs interested in competing in the Premier II Division should contact the League Manager.

2.04 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 I - Mid South will automatically qualify for the National League Cup (Southeast Playoffs) that same seasonal year.

2.05 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 I - Mid South will be automatically accepted (should the team apply) into a NL Winter Event for the next seasonal year.

SECTION 3. TEAM ROSTERS

3.01 Team Rosters (Squadi)

The Squadi 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 Squadi roster no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to the weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

Any club pass player must be added to the Squadi roster and Match Card no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to the weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match. Any club pass player, once added to a team's Club Pass pool, cannot be removed until the completion of the season and will count toward the 30 player maximum.

3.02 Club Pass Players

- a. In The National League, only players who hold a current USYS member pass from within the same USYS-affiliated club may be a club pass player. The home state association for a team will determine the definition of club pass for this purpose.

- b. The maximum number of club pass players on an event roster is 21.

3.03 Playing of Ineligible Player(s)

Accusations from teams of an ineligible player must be extensively substantiated and is incumbent on the accuser to provide concrete evidence of ineligibility.

SECTION 4. 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 gender age groups in Premier I will play between five (5) to nine (9) matches in a round-robin format. The final match count and league format will be determined by the League Manager.

4.02 NL Mid South Match Types

There are three (3) types of matches within the NL Mid South:

- 1) **Event Matches** are those Premier I matches scheduled and played in an event format. These matches primarily include teams from two different states. The scheduling of these matches will be done solely at the discretion of the League Manager (Section 4.05).
- 2) **Self-Schedule Matches** are those matches which are the responsibility of the teams, clubs, and/or state association to schedule/manage (Section 4.06). Self-Schedule Matches typically include two teams from the same state, but in certain situations may include teams from different states. Each respective State Association will have oversight of matches that includes two teams from that state.
- 3) **Premier II Division Matches** are those that involve member clubs of the Premier II Division of the NL Mid South. The scheduling of these matches will be done solely at the discretion of the League Manager (Section 4.07).

4.03 Location of Event Matches

The location of event matches will be determined by the League Manager, in coordination with the respective hosting State Association.

4.04 Lodging Requirement

The NL Team Premier I - Mid South requires the use of Traveling Teams, Inc. (TTI) by teams who are scheduled to participate in Inter-state events. All pertinent hotel information and requirements can be found on the The National League website.

4.05 Event Match Schedules

The League Manager will have sole discretion in scheduling event matches. The intention of the NL Mid South is to publish the schedule approximately one (1) month prior to the first event match weekend. The event match schedules will take into account the following situations:

- A. **Head Coaches of multiple teams.** Every attempt will be made to de-conflict coaches of two (2) teams within the same NL division. Head coaches of three (3) or more teams cannot be guaranteed. The Head Coach of a team must be accurately listed in Squadi prior to the schedule being published in order to be considered for de-conflicting.
- B. **ACT / SAT dates.** Should a NL Mid South date fall on a SAT or ACT test date, the older age groups will be scheduled as late in the day as possible (i.e. 2pm or later) so that, at a minimum, a player can take the test in the same area as the inter-state match and participate in their scheduled match.

- C. **Distance of Travel.** Every attempt will be made so that teams traveling a greater distance will play later on Saturday and earlier on Sunday.

4.06 Self-Schedule Match Schedules

The respective State Association shall coordinate and confirm most self-schedule matches. The State Association may or may not schedule self-schedule matches in an event format, but the self-schedule match details should be confirmed early in the season. For 2025-26, self-schedule matches must be played prior to June 1, 2026. Any self-schedule matches not played prior to the deadline will not be scored and will be considered as a “no contest”.

Self-Schedule matches that are between teams from the same club must be played during the first half of each team’s season or the match will be considered as a “no contest”, subject to the final determination by the League Manager.

4.07 Premier II Division Match Schedules

The League Manager will have sole discretion in scheduling any Premier II Division events. Any matches not included in the Premier II Division events shall be referred back to the clubs to self-schedule.

4.08 Match Schedule and Rest Periods

It is the intent of the league to play only one (1) 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 for a minimum of three (3) hours rest between matches. Most circumstances involving teams playing two (2) matches in a day will be related to inclement weather dates which have been rescheduled.

4.09 Inclement Weather and Unplayable Field Conditions Prior to Match

The Host Complex / 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. The League Manager, in consultation with the host complex, will make every effort to determine the status of event matches by Wednesday prior to the event weekend of play (Saturday and Sunday). Rescheduling of event matches are done in accordance with Conference Rescheduling Policy below (Section 4.10).

4.10 Rescheduling Policy

Once the event and self-schedule match details are published the schedule will be considered official. Reschedule requests are permitted at the discretion of the League Manager due to transcription errors, inaccurate information provided or other errors as determined by the League Manager. Any reschedule situation not included here-in will be determined at the sole discretion of the League Manager.

SECTION 5. REFEREES

5.01 Referee Assignor

The League Manager, in consultation with 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 according to US Youth Soccer Policy unless the State Association or hosting club chooses to invoice US Youth Soccer for the assignor fees.

5.02 Payment of Referees

Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid at the fields, prior to the start of each match. Each team involved in a NL Mid South match will be responsible for paying half of the total cost for the Referee and Assistant Referees. Premier I matches and Premier II matches will have different rates. The Referee and Assistant Referees will be paid in accordance with the below totals and breakdown of denominations

Premier I Games:

- **13U-14U: \$170.00 (Center \$70, AR1 \$50, AR2 \$50)**
 - \$85.00 per team.
 - Breakdown of denomination: 1 x \$50, 1 x \$20, 1 x \$10, 1 x \$5 – Per Team
- **15U-16U: \$190.00 (Center \$80, AR1 \$55, AR2 \$55)**
 - \$95.00 per team.
 - Breakdown of denomination: 1 x \$50, 2 x \$20, 1 x \$5 – Per Team
- **17U-19U: \$210.00 (Center \$90, AR1 \$60, AR2 \$60)**
 - \$105.00 per team.
 - Breakdown of denomination: 1 x \$50, 2 x \$20, 1 x \$10, 1 x \$5 – Per Team

Premier II Games:

- **13U-14U: \$150.00 (Center \$70, AR1 \$40, AR2 \$40)**
 - \$75.00 per team
 - Breakdown of denomination: 3 x \$20, 1 x \$10, 1 x \$5 – Per Team
- **15U-16U: \$165.00 (Center \$75, AR1 \$45, AR2 \$45)**
 - \$82.50 per team
 - Breakdown of denomination: 3 x \$20, 1 x \$10, 2 x \$5, 2 x \$1, 2 x \$0.25 – Per Team
- **17U-19U: \$180.00 (Center \$80, AR1 \$50, AR2 \$50)**
 - \$90.00 per team.
 - Breakdown of denomination: 1 x \$50, 2 x \$20 – Per Team

SECTION 6. MATCH DAY PROCEDURES

6.01 Team Line-Up

The Squadi Match Card shall be the official Team Line-Up for a NL Mid South match. The Match Card for each match should be printed no earlier than 24 hours prior to the scheduled start of that match. This timing will ensure the most accurate information for each Team Line-Up. The eighteen (18) eligible players (inclusive of both primary and club pass players) should be listed on the Match Card no later than Friday at 12pm CT prior to the weekend of play, or in the case of a weeknight match, no later than 24 hours prior to the weeknight match.

6.02 Team/Player Check-In

Prior to the start of a match, each team shall present the referee with the copy of the Match Card and their properly prepared USYS/State Association Player Passes. Electronic Players passes are acceptable.

The Referee shall check-in each team's players using both the Match Card and USYS/State Association Player Passes. Only a maximum of eighteen (18) players may be checked in for a 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 League Official to perform any required check-in.

6.03 Team Bench / Spectator Areas

The teams will occupy the same side of the field, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager. Teams are to remain on their half of the field between the halfway line and eighteen yards from their goal line. Spectators are to only occupy the opposite side of the field from the teams on the same end of the field as their team bench area, unless otherwise instructed by the League Manager. Coaches/Managers are required to maintain control of their players and their team's fans on the sideline.

6.04 Post-Match Protocol

Following the conclusion of the game, the Referee shall fill out the official Match Report (Squadi Match Card) used for player check-in per Section 6.02 of the operating procedure. The Coach or Team Official from each team is required to validate the information on Match Report prior to leaving the field area. If a hard copy Squadi Match Card is used, each team must take a picture of the Match Report for their records.

The Match Report (in cases of a hard copy) will be kept by the Referee and submitted to the Referee Assignor or League official. In some cases, the League Manager may adjust how the Match Report is submitted to the League.

6.05 Reporting of Scores and Red Cards

The winning team, or in the case of a tie, the home team, is responsible for promptly and accurately reporting the score of their match in Squadi, in addition to reporting any red cards issued. If the referee submits the final match details, both teams should review the match information promptly for accuracy. In situations where a Squadi Match Card hard copy is utilized, Teams must take a picture of the completed Match Report so they can upload it into Squadi immediately following the match. The reporting of a particular match score and any red cards issued needs to be done within one (1) hour of the completed match.

6.06 Protests

Protests must be made in accordance with The National League Team Based Rules

6.07 Final Authority

The League Manager shall have final authority to act in the best interest of the NL Team Premier I - Mid South 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 Mid South Operating Procedures.