

2025 U.S. Open Cup Pick'em

Official Playing Rules

1. ELIGIBILITY

All members of reddit are eligible to enter this Pick'em. However, each redditor may only enter the Pick'em once. Each contestant may pick a subreddit to play for; some prizes will be awarded to the top performing subreddit. Those who do not pick a subreddit to play for will be assigned to the 'usopencup' subreddit.

2. FORMAT

Each round, a form will be released, with the games for that round to be selected. They will be placed in order by start time; the home club will always be listed first. For each game, each contestant will select who they believe will advance to the next round. Whether they advance in regulation, in extra time, via kicks from the spot, or via forfeit does not matter; they all count as a win.

- Should the USSF exclude a club from participating before the start of their first game, giving their opponent a free pass to the next round, the game will be treated as if it did not exist.
- Should a club forfeit their match before the scheduled time of their match, the game will be treated as if it did not exist.

In addition, each contestant will "star" eight club:

- Three Open Division clubs before Round 1 (one USL League Two club, one NPSL club, one local qualifier)
 - Note that we define a local qualifier as any Open Division club that is not from USL League Two or NPSL.
- Two Division III clubs before Round 1 (one USL League One club and one MLS Next Pro club)
- One Division II club before Round 1 (amongst those USL Championship clubs entering in Round 1)
- One Division II club before Round 3 (amongst those USL Championship clubs entering in Round 3)
- One Division I club before Round 4 (MLS clubs).

Bonus points will be available for the "star" clubs that advance the furthest amongst their group.

- Should the USSF exclude a club from participating before the start of their first game, giving their opponent a free pass to the next round, management will attempt to reach out to any participant who picked that club as a "star" club. No such courtesy exists if the USSF excludes a club after they have played their first game.

3. ANTI-HEDGING POLICY

To preserve the integrity of the competition, anti-hedging policies are in place to prevent players from using their "star" clubs as a hedge bet.

- Clubs picked as a "star" club must be selected to win against any non-"star" club at their level or lower, with few exceptions.
 - MLS "star" clubs, therefore, must be picked to win every game of the tournament.

- USL Championship “star” clubs must be picked to beat other USL clubs, MLS Next Pro clubs, or amateur clubs.
- USL League One and MLS Next Pro “star” clubs must be picked to beat other L1 clubs, MLS Next Pro clubs, NISA clubs, or amateur clubs.
- Amateur “star” clubs must be picked to beat other amateur clubs.
- Clubs picked as a “star” club must be selected to win against any non-“star” club, even those at a higher level, if only a win would allow the club to earn bonus points for their “star” club. These will be announced ahead of time.
 - For the purposes of this rule, the tiebreakers used to award bonus points are ignored.
- Should a player have both clubs in a matchup as a “star” club, the player may select either to win, regardless of the clubs’ levels.

4. SCORING

Each game correctly predicted is worth a base 10 points. In addition, if a contestant correctly predicts the result for at least 60% of the round’s games involving a specified group, they may qualify for bonus points.

Provided that there are at least five games in the round involving the specified group, a contestant who correctly predicts 60% of the games involving the group collects a bonus base 20 points. This base bonus increases to 35 points should 80% of the games be correctly predicted, and 50 points if all games are correctly predicted.

Specified groups include: MLS, USL Championship, USL League One, MLS Next Pro, USL League Two, NPSL, and local qualifiers. In addition, Management reserves the right to consider all remaining amateur clubs to be a group, or all remaining Division III clubs to be a group, if smaller groups are no longer viable.

Each round’s base points will be multiplied by the round’s multiplier to give total points:

Rd	Games	Multiplier	Each Game	60%	80%	100%
1	32	2	20 (640)	40	70	100
2	16	3	30 (480)	60	105	150
3	16	5	50 (800)	100	175	250
4	16	10	100 (1600)	200	350	500
5	8	20	200 (1600)	400	700	1000
6	4	50	500 (2000)	X	X	X
Semi	2	100	1000 (2000)	X	X	X
Final	1	250	2500	X	X	X

Bonus points will be awarded in addition for a contestant’s “star” clubs doing well:

- Open Cup champion - 3000 points
- Open Cup runner-up - 1000 points
- Best Division II, Division III or amateur club - 500 points
 - Best in USL Championship (Round 1 entry), USL Championship (Round 3 entry), USL League One, MLS Next Pro, USL League Two, NPSL, or local qualifying - 250 points

Note that each “star” club wins only the highest bonus points that they are entitled to. Should all remaining clubs in a subgroup be eliminated in the same round, the following tiebreakers will be used. Note: for this tiebreaker, “wins” come in regulation or extra time; “draws” are any game ending in a penalty shootout.

- A. Most wins
- B. Most wins + draws
- C. Most wins in regulation
- D. Goal differential
- E. Goals scored
- F. All clubs remaining are awarded the bonus

5. DEADLINES

Each round’s submissions will end 60 minutes before the first Open Cup match of the round. While it may not be feasible for the submission form to be closed at the deadline, all entries are timestamped and late entries will not be accepted.

Should a contestant miss a deadline, they will be assigned predictions under the following criteria, informally known as “the house way”:

- A. If one of the clubs involved in a match is a “star” club, and the other is not, the “star” club will be picked to win.
- B. If both clubs in a match is a “star” club, or neither club in a match is, the club from the higher tier is picked to win.
- C. If both clubs in the match are at the same level, the home club will be picked to win.
- D. “Star” clubs picked to win will be awarded points at full value. Non-“star” clubs picked to win will be awarded points at half value.
- E. The contestant will be ineligible to earn bonus points for that round, for picking 60% or higher of a specified group.

6. PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded as follows:

- A. The contestant with the most points after the Open Cup final will receive the First Prize, a \$75 Amazon gift card. The second-place contestant will receive the Second Prize, a \$50 Amazon gift card. The third-place contestant will receive the Third Prize, a \$25 Amazon gift card.
- B. Each contestant has the option of choosing a subreddit to represent. Each subreddit’s top five entries will be summed, and the subreddit with the highest score will be declared the winning subreddit. All five of the top scoring entries from that subreddit will equally share the Top Subreddit Prize, \$50 in Amazon gift cards.
- C. Subreddits may sponsor prizes exclusively for those reddit members who represent them in the contest; however, a subreddit must have at least 10 entries representing them before they will be deemed eligible to sponsor prizes.

Should there be a tie in awarding the Top Subreddit Prize, the sixth-highest scoring entry from the tied subreddits will be considered. Should they be tied, the seventh-highest will be considered, and so on. If, in the course of the tie, one subreddit is exhausted of entries, the other subreddit will be deemed to have won the Top Subreddit Prize.

Should the First Prize, Second Prize, or Third Prize be tied, the affected prizes shall be split equally amongst the tied contestants. Management will keep any odd cents left over.

Any redditor who volunteers to assist in running the competition is welcome to play; however, they are not permitted to win any prizes:

- An ineligible redditor shall be skipped over in the awarding of First Prize, Second Prize, and Third Prize.
- An ineligible redditor shall be denied their share of the Top Subreddit Prize; the remaining prize-winning members of their squad shall receive a larger share in response.

7. SAVING CLAUSE

Management reserves the right to make changes to these rules as necessary to preserve the integrity of the competition.