



2023-2024 ECNL COMPETITION RULES

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The Elite Clubs National League (“ECNL”) is a player development platform for youth soccer players in the United States. These Rules and Regulations (the “Regulations”) outline the rules for ECNL Competition (as defined below).

1. **Definitions**

1.1 “ECNL” means the Elite Clubs National League.

1.2 “ECNL Member Club” means a member club of the ECNL, as provided in the bylaws of the ECNL, participating in the ECNL Club Competition for the ECNL Season. For purposes of these Regulations, an “ECNL Club” includes both ECNL Member Clubs and clubs participating in the ECNL Regional League.

1.3 **Competitions.** “ECNL Competition” means, collectively, ECNL Club Competition and ECNL Regional League Competition.

1.3.1 “ECNL Club Competition” is a game in the ECNL Season between ECNL Teams of ECNL Member Clubs in the Club Competition level.

1.3.2 “ECNL Regional League Competition” is a game in the ECNL Season between ECNL Regional League Teams in an ECNL Regional League.

1.3.3 NOTE: When approved in writing by the ECNL, a club may have teams participate in designated “Pre-ECNL” competitions at U11 and U12. All such competitions must be sanctioned by US Club Soccer and all players and staff in these competitions must be carded with US Club Soccer. Beyond the above, due to the informal nature of such competition, these Regulations do not apply to Pre-ECNL competitions except as provided in Exhibit E..

1.4 **Teams.** “ECNL Team” means, collectively ECNL Club Teams and ECNL Regional League Teams.

1.4.1 “ECNL Club Team” is the team of an ECNL Member Club that participates in ECNL Club Competition in either the U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, or U18/U19 age groups.

1.4.2 “ECNL Regional League Team” is a team in an ECNL Regional League in either the U13, U14, U15, U16, U17 and/or U18/U19 age groups.

1.5 “ECNL Post-Season” means Post-Season competition for any ECNL Team. “ECNL Club Post-Season” means the ECNL Playoffs and the ECNL Finals. “ECNL Regional League Post-Season” means the ECNL Regional League Playoff Events (if applicable) and the ECNL Regional League Finals.

1.6 “ECNL Club Fixture” means the ECNL Club Competition between two (2) ECNL Member Clubs either: (i) at all age groups (U13-U18/U19), or (ii) at the four oldest age groups (U15-U18/U19), that are either scheduled by the ECNL to be completed on the same day, or are modified by the clubs to be scheduled over multiple days.

1.7 “ECNL Match Report” means the official match report that must be completed for all ECNL Competitions as provided in Section 5 of these Regulations.

1.8 “ECNL National Event” means one of the regular season events hosted by the ECNL at either the ECNL Club Competition level or the ECNL Regional League level.

1.9 Intentionally Omitted.

1.10 “ECNL Registered Player” means a player on an ECNL Team’s Roster, and includes teams in ECNL Club Competition or ECNL Regional League Competition. ECNL Registered Players must be registered with US Club Soccer (in the ECNL Club Competition, ECNL Regional League, or Pre-ECNL).

1.11 “ECNL Regular Season” means the regular season ECNL Competitions played prior to the ECNL Post-Season.

1.12 “ECNL Roster” means the roster of an ECNL Team in an ECNL Competition.

1.13 “ECNL Season” means the competitive season beginning August 1 of each year and ending July 31 of the following year, including both the ECNL Regular Season and the ECNL Post-Season.

1.14 “Incident Report” is a report in the form for reporting disciplinary incidents during ECNL Competitions.

2. ECNL Roster Rules

2.1 Age Groups and Roster Maximums.

2.1.1 **ECNL Club Competition Age Groups.** Every ECNL Member Club must field an ECNL Team in all six age groups (U13-U18/U19) of ECNL Club Competition.

2.1.2 **ECNL Regional League Competition Age Groups.** ECNL Regional Leagues may include any combination of age groups from U13 - U18/U19 (maximum of 6 age groups), as determined by the ECNL. Different ECNL Regional Leagues may have different required age groups, as permitted by the ECNL. All participating clubs in the ECNL Regional League must have a team in all age groups required for that league, unless a written waiver is provided by the ECNL at its sole discretion.

2.1.3 **Roster Maximums.** A maximum of thirty (30) players may be rostered on any ECNL Team’s Roster (in any age group). Once a player is added to an ECNL Team’s Roster, the player shall count against the roster maximum even if later released or transferred, unless the Commissioner, at the Commissioner’s discretion, determines an exception is appropriate due to unique and exceptional circumstances.

2.2 **Player Registration and Intra-Club Roster Movement.** All players on any ECNL Roster must be ECNL Registered Players.

2.2.1 **Player Movement Between League Competitions.** Except as outlined in Rule 2.10, ECNL Registered Players may participate in ECNL Club Competition and ECNL Regional League Competition with the club they are registered to, as long as they are: (i) age eligible; (ii) meet all specific eligibility requirements in these Regulations; and (iii) compete in only one (1) ECNL Competition per day. Players that play in multiple ECNL Competitions

must be registered as an ECNL Registered Player to one primary team in one ECNL Competition, and will not count against the roster maximum for other teams. A player's primary team is the team on which he/she is initially registered.

2.2.2 Player Movement Between Age Groups. ECNL Registered Players may participate in any age group of ECNL Competition within the club they are carded to as long as they are age eligible and meet all other requirements in these Regulations.

2.2.3 Restrictions on Program Movement Within League Competition. Subject to the Transfer Regulations below, players may not play in multiple programs within any individual ECNL Competition. For clarification: (i) if a club has multiple programs in ECNL Club Competition, a player may only play on one program in ECNL Club Competition; and (ii) if a club has multiple programs in an ECNL Regional League, a player may only play on one program in each ECNL Regional League.

2.2.4 Collegiate Players. Any player that appears on a college soccer roster or plays in a college soccer match in the fall season is ineligible to participate in any ECNL Competition. A player that participates in ECNL Competition in the fall and / or winter season, and then appears on a college soccer roster or plays in a college soccer match in the spring college season, is eligible to participate in ECNL Competition after the collegiate season, so long as they play with the ECNL Club they are initially rostered with.

2.3 ECNL Game Day Roster and Fixture Ties.

2.3.1 Game Day Roster. A maximum of eighteen (18) ECNL Registered Players from an ECNL Team's Roster will be eligible for each game in ECNL Competition (the "Game Day Roster"). If more than eighteen (18) ECNL Registered Players appear on any ECNL Roster, the "active" players for the ECNL Competition must be identified on the Match Report and "inactive" players must be struck through. All participating players in any ECNL Competition must appear on the Game Day Roster and match report and must be ECNL Registered Players. Once a player appears on a Game Day Roster, the player will be deemed to have played in the ECNL Competition and therefore be fixture-tied unless the player is struck through on the match report.

2.3.2 Game Limits. ECNL Registered Players may only play on one (1) ECNL Team per day, and may only play in one (1) ECNL Competition per day.

2.3.3 Fixture Ties. Except as provided below and in Rule 2.9.2, an ECNL Registered Player may only play one (1) game in any ECNL Club Fixture. If the ECNL Club Fixture has ECNL Club Competitions scheduled on multiple days, (for example, the U15 and U16 games on Saturday and the U17 and U18/U19 games on Sunday), an ECNL Registered Player is still restricted to participating in only one (1) of the ECNL Club Competitions within the ECNL Club Fixture. (NOTE: Fixture ties apply separately at each level - ECNL Club Competition and ECNL Regional League.)

2.3.3.1 U13/14 Fixture Tie Exception: ECNL Registered Players at the U13 or U14 age group may play in both a U13 or U14 ECNL Club Competition and in an ECNL Club Competition in one age group of U15 - U18/U19 ECNL Club Competitions in the same ECNL Club Fixture, provided that the U13 or U14

ECNL Registered Player does not play more than one (1) ECNL Competition per day. ECNL Registered Players at U13 or U14 may play only in one of the U13 or U14 games, (assuming age eligible for both), within an ECNL Club Fixture, not both games, regardless of the days on which the games are scheduled. For purposes of clarification, the U13 and U14 ECNL Competitions are not considered part of a U15 - U18/19 fixture if the U13 and U14 games are scheduled on different days than the U15-U18/19 games.

2.4 Player Drops. No ECNL Registered Players may be dropped from an ECNL Roster during an ECNL Season, except pursuant to the Transfer Regulations below or unless the player is released.

2.5 Roster Freeze Date. Players may be added to an ECNL Roster until May 1st of each year. Notwithstanding the foregoing, after May 1st of the ECNL Season and until the designated "Roster Freeze Date" communicated by the ECNL, each club may add up to two (2) new players at each age group to an ECNL Roster for the remainder of the ECNL Season, provided they meet the following conditions: (i) they are joining the club for the upcoming ECNL season; (ii) there is room on the existing roster to do so; and (iii) if the player is subject to the Transfer Regulations, the transfer has been approved pursuant to those Regulations. These "new" players will count against the roster maximums. The Roster Freeze Date will be annually determined by the ECNL.

2.6 Roster Club Ties

2.6.1 ECNL Club Competition - Club Tie. A player may only be rostered to ECNL Teams within one (1) ECNL Member Club each ECNL Season, except pursuant to the Transfer Regulations provided below.

2.6.2 ECNL Regional League Competition - Club Tie. A player may only be rostered to one club in an ECNL Regional League in each ECNL Season, except pursuant to the Transfer Regulations provided below.

2.7 Initial Roster Submission Date; Roster Add Periods. Unless an exception is granted by the ECNL, an initial ECNL Roster with a minimum of fifteen (15) ECNL Registered Players must be provided by each ECNL Team by the date designated by the ECNL of each ECNL Season.

2.8 Intentionally Omitted.

2.9 Trapped Player Exceptions.

2.9.1 Trapped U18/U19 Player. An ECNL Registered Player that is in 11th grade, but who is age appropriate for the U18/U19 age group, is classified as a "Trapped U18/U19 Player". A Trapped U18/U19 Player is eligible to participate in games at U17 ECNL National Events in the ECNL Regular Season, and in all divisions of the ECNL Club Post-season except for the Champions League. Trapped U18/U19 Players are not eligible to participate in the ECNL Regional League Post-season. Where they are eligible to play as indicated above, there is no limit on the number of Trapped U18/U19 Players that may participate in any single game.

2.9.2 **Trapped U15 Player.** An ECNL Registered Player that is in 8th grade, but who is age appropriate for the U15 age group is classified as a “Trapped U15 Player”. A Trapped U15 Player is eligible to participate in U14 ECNL Competition that is played during the player’s sanctioned high school soccer association’s competition season. A Trapped U15 Player that competes in a U14 ECNL Competition pursuant to this Rule 2.9.2 may also compete in the same ECNL Fixture at U15 through U18/U19, provided he/she only plays one (1) ECNL Competition per day. No more than two (2) Trapped U15 Players may participate in any individual U14 ECNL Competition.

2.10 **ECNL Post-Season Roster Tie.** The ECNL Post-Season includes multiple stages. An ECNL Registered Player may play for only one ECNL Team in the ECNL Post-season, subject to the exceptions below. Players will be roster-tied to a specific team and age group at check-in of the first ECNL Postseason stage in which they appear.

2.10.1 **ECNL Post-season Exceptions.**

2.10.1.1 **U13 - U17 Club Competition Finals and U13 – U17 ECNL Regional League Finals.** An ECNL Member Club that qualifies a team for the U13 - U17 ECNL Finals or U13 – U17 ECNL Regional League Finals (a “Finals Qualifying Team”) may move up to three (3) players from the club who were rostered at a different age group at the ECNL Playoffs or an ECNL Regional League Playoff Event onto the roster of the Finals Qualifying Team for the ECNL Finals or ECNL Regional League Finals, provided such players are age eligible and there is room on the roster.

2.10.1.2 **U18/U19 Club Competition Finals or U18/19 ECNL Regional League Finals.** An ECNL Registered Player who is rostered at the U18/U19 age group for either the ECNL Club Competition Finals or an ECNL Regional League Playoff Event is permitted to move to another age group for the U13-U17 ECNL Finals or U13-U17 ECNL Regional League Finals provided they are age eligible to participate for that team.

2.10.1.3. **Regional League Competition to Club Competition.** An ECNL Registered Player who participates in an ECNL Regional League Playoff Event may be rostered to an ECNL Team in the ECNL Playoffs provided they are age eligible to participate for that team. However, only three (3) players per age group who are rostered on an ECNL Regional League Playoff Event may also participate in the ECNL Playoffs at the ECNL Club Competition level.

2.11 **Club Loyalty Rule.**

2.11.1 The ECNL is intended to be a development platform for players and teams, requiring a connection between the regular team training environment and the competition environment. As such, Rule 2.11.1 applies to all ECNL Registered Players except for the enumerated exceptions provided in Rule 2.11.3 and Rule 2.11.4, and as provided below in Rule 2.12 regarding Discovery Players. Once registered, an ECNL Registered Player may only participate in 11v11 outdoor competitions with his/her ECNL Member Club for the duration of the ECNL Season (unless released pursuant to the ECNL transfer/release rules herein or otherwise as provided below in this section 2.11). (For purposes of

clarification, the ECNL Registered Player may appear in any 11v11 outdoor competition in which the ECNL Club participates during the ECNL Season. This requirement only applies to US Soccer member-sanctioned competitions and does not apply to informal, unsanctioned 11v11 outdoor competitions.) Except as provided below, if an ECNL Registered Player plays in a US Soccer member-sanctioned 11v11 outdoor competition for a different club besides the ECNL Club to which he/she is registered as an ECNL Registered Player after the date he/she became rostered as an ECNL Registered Player (“Multiple Club Rostering”), the eligibility of the ECNL Registered Player will be reviewed by the ECNL Commissioner. If it is determined by the ECNL Commissioner that the ECNL Club to which the ECNL Registered Player is registered was aware of the Multiple Club Rostering, the ECNL Commissioner may take any or all of the following actions, without limitation: (i) declare the ECNL Registered Player ineligible for the remainder of that ECNL Season; (ii) declare all games in which the ECNL Registered Player appeared on the ECNL Roster as forfeits by the ECNL Team on which such player was rostered; and / or (iii) recommend revocation of the ECNL Member Club’s membership in the ECNL.

2.11.2 Unless otherwise approved in writing by the ECNL as noted below, Rule 2.11.1 also applies to any ECNL Club with franchises, independent affiliates, or with agreements licensing use of the trademarks of the ECNL Club to another youth soccer club or entity (such ECNL Member Club is a “Franchise Club”). Each franchisee of the Franchise Club, independent affiliate of the Franchise Club, or licensee of the Franchise Club, shall be considered a separate and independent club for purposes of these rules.

NOTE: If an ECNL Club has a clearly defined affiliate or development program or relationship with one or more club(s) within 200 miles, upon request the ECNL will review the structure to determine whether and where Discovery Player status is required based upon the overall structure, control mechanisms, and other factors at the league’s sole discretion. It is the club’s responsibility to request this review in advance to determine compliance in order to prevent potential sanction. The league has sole discretion on these determinations. The league may create exemptions to this rule for the 2023-2024 season at its discretion, on a case-by-case basis.

2.11.3 Rule 2.11.1 does not apply to ECNL Registered Players that participate in the following pre-professional league competitions with another club: (i) the WPSL (ii) USL W League; and (iii) the USL Academy U19 League.

2.11.4 Rule 2.11.1 does not apply to ECNL Registered Players that participate in a tournament as a guest player with another club, or to “All-Star” or other player identification events or tournaments. For clarification, no ECNL Registered Players may participate in a tournament with a different ECNL Club unless they are approved as outlined in Rule 2.13.1.1.

2.12 **Discovery Players**

2.12.1 A “Discovery Player” is a player that is not considered a full-time participant in the training environment of the ECNL Club to which he/she is registered, and is therefore an exception to Rule 2.11 above. A player must be classified by the ECNL Club as a Discovery Player if any one or more of the following circumstances exist:

(i) The player's primary address is more than 200 miles from the ECNL Club's primary training facility; or

(ii) During the ECNL Season, the player appears on a league roster in a US Soccer member-sanctioned outdoor 11v11 league for any other club besides the ECNL Club to which they are registered as an ECNL Registered Player, and as such would violate Rule 2.11.

NOTE: Where there is a dispute regarding multiple addresses or sites, the ECNL shall have the final determination as to a player's primary address and an ECNL Club's primary training facility.

For clarification, a Discovery Player may appear on a league roster for a team of a non-ECNL Club, or a non-ECNL Team of another ECNL Club.

NOTE: A player may play in the ECNL Regional League for a club that competes only in the ECNL Regional League (and not in the ECNL Club Competition), and be a Discovery Player in another club in the ECNL Club Competition.

A Discovery Player must be explicitly designated as such on the ECNL Roster before participating in any ECNL Competition. Discovery Players are eligible to participate in all ECNL Competitions.

2.12.1.1 At the U13, U14, U15, U16, and U17 age groups, each ECNL Club may have two (2) Discovery Players at each age group. These Discovery Players may play in ECNL Club Competition and / or ECNL Regional League Competition, but no more than two (2) players may be Discovery Players in each age group, regardless of the level at which these players compete.

2.12.1.2 At the U18/U19 age group, each ECNL Club may have four (4) Discovery Players. These Discovery Players may play in ECNL Club Competition and / or ECNL Regional League Competition, but no more than two (2) players may be Discovery Players in each age group, regardless of the level at which these players compete.

2.12.2 Discovery Players may only play for the age groups for which they are formally rostered as Discovery Players. For the purpose of clarification, a Discovery Player may play in multiple age groups in the ECNL, provided that the Discovery Player is listed and rostered as one of the limited number of Discovery Players in every age group in which they play.

2.12.3 **Classification Responsibility and Integrity.** It is the responsibility of the ECNL Club to appropriately classify players as Discovery Players. If a player should have been classified as a Discovery Player by the ECNL Club and the player was not properly classified as such by the ECNL Club, the Commissioner will review the facts and circumstances surrounding the player's registration. If the Commissioner, at the Commissioner's sole discretion, determines that the ECNL Club negligently or intentionally ignored the Discovery Player classification in the registration process, or that

the player was ineligible, the ECNL Club shall face potential point reduction, forfeiture, post-season disqualification, fines, or other sanction.

2.13 **Recruiting; Tryouts; Registration.**

2.13.1 **Recruiting; No Tampering.** ECNL Clubs may recruit players for participation on ECNL Teams at any time during the year (subject to these Regulations) and subject to the following restrictions.

2.13.1.1 ECNL Clubs may not train, invite a player to train, tryout, invite a player to tryout, or have play in any tournament or competition as a guest player any ECNL Registered Player from another ECNL Club prior to the Designated Tryout Date (provided in Exhibit C) of that season, unless the player has been released (or it has been expressly approved in writing) by their current ECNL Club to do so.

2.13.1.2 Clubs may not invite a player to train, invite a player to tryout, or promote their club to players or their parents or guardians during any ECNL Competition in which the player is currently participating.

2.13.1.3 *Note: ECNL coaches and administrators may be subject to the rules of other U.S. Soccer organization members regarding recruitment and tryouts if they compete in other competitions or leagues outside of the ECNL.*

2.13.2 **Tryouts.** Except for Rule 2.13.1 above, the ECNL does not mandate when a club can and cannot have tryouts for its ECNL Teams. For purposes of clarification, except for tryouts of ECNL Registered Players of other ECNL Clubs, tryouts for ECNL Teams may be held at any time of the year. Leveraging or attempting to force a player to register or pay fees for future years prior to the Designated Tryout Date, if the player is not comfortable doing so, undermines the intent of the ECNL Tryout rules and will be considered in considering transfer requests.

2.13.3 **Registration.** For clerical purposes, the ECNL will not accept rosters for any ECNL Team for the upcoming ECNL Season until the week after the ECNL Finals are completed.

2.13.4 **New ECNL Clubs.** New member clubs admitted to the ECNL for the upcoming ECNL Season, or new clubs participating in an ECNL Regional League for the upcoming season, are not considered to have any ECNL Registered Players, (unless they are playing as a Discovery Player currently), until those players are rostered for the upcoming ECNL Season.

2.13.5 **Recruiting and Competition Integrity.** If in the recruiting process, (i) an ECNL Club (the "Recruiting Club") recruits or signs significant numbers of players from another ECNL Club (the "Prior Club") for the next ECNL Season, and (ii) the Prior Club is unable to fulfill ECNL Post-Season obligations for the current ECNL Season, the ECNL will review to determine how the Recruiting Club's actions influenced this failure. If the ECNL, in its sole discretion, determines that the Recruiting Club played a significant role in the Prior Club's inability to attend the ECNL Post-Season or finish games in the current ECNL Regular

Season, the ECNL may sanction the Recruiting Club, including without limitation by removing events from the Recruiting Club in the subsequent season.

3. Competition Rules

3.1 **General.** Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, all ECNL Competitions shall be played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game in force at the time of competition as provided by the International Football Association Board.

3.2 Scheduling and Number of Competitions.

3.2.1 **Club Competitions.** The ECNL shall identify the number, dates and locations of all ECNL Club Competitions, including the number of required ECNL National Events for each ECNL Member Club. All ECNL Member Clubs must play all ECNL Club Competitions. All ECNL Member Clubs must play all ECNL Club Competitions within an ECNL Club Fixture on the same day, unless both clubs agree to split the ECNL Club Fixture to different days, and it is approved by the ECNL.

3.2.2 **Regional League Competitions.** The ECNL shall identify the number, dates and locations of all ECNL Regional League Competitions which the ECNL operates. (Licensed ECNL Regional Leagues shall determine their own schedules pursuant to the agreement between the league and the ECNL.). All clubs participating in the ECNL Regional League must play all ECNL Regional League Competitions.

3.4 **Canceled Competitions.** If any ECNL Competition is canceled without starting, or without reaching half-time during any ECNL Competition, the ECNL Commissioner shall determine if and how such ECNL Competition shall be rescheduled. If the ECNL Commissioner determines that it is impossible to reschedule such canceled ECNL Competition, the ECNL Competition shall be considered a non-played game, and neither team shall be awarded any points. In the event that games are canceled pursuant to this Rule 3.4, the ECNL Commissioner may alter the method by which ECNL standings are determined for impacted age groups, or the qualification process for the ECNL Playoffs or ECNL Finals for impacted age groups. Any ECNL Competition that reaches half-time before being canceled shall be considered a completed game.

3.4.1 **COVID or Other Uncontrolled Cancellations.** Due to the challenges and uncertainty presented by COVID-19 or other uncontrolled circumstances, some scheduled ECNL Competitions may not occur as scheduled due to local, state, or federal law, orders, regulations, rules or requirements, due to the unwillingness of teams to participate due to concerns of potential disease transmission, or due to other uncontrollable circumstances, (each a "Uncontrollable Concern"). In the event that any team or club is unable or unwilling to participate in any specific ECNL Competition due to an Uncontrollable Concern, the team or club must provide written notice to the ECNL identifying the specific ECNL Competition(s) impacted by the Uncontrollable Concern and the specific reasons for not participating in such competition. The club or team shall provide the written notice to the ECNL as soon as possible and in no event less than 24 hours after it has confirmed its inability or unwillingness to participate. The ECNL will review this notice and, at its discretion, confirm the competition as canceled or postponed (if possible) due to an Uncontrollable Concern (each such competition considered an "Uncontrollable Cancellation Competition"). The ECNL may have to postpone or cancel scheduled ECNL Competitions based upon local, state or federal law, orders, regulations,

rules or requirements or based upon member clubs withdrawing from scheduled or assigned competitions based upon an Uncontrollable Concern (each such competition considered an “Uncontrollable Cancellation Competition”). The ECNL reserves the right to deny requests for cancellations, postponements or modifications to the competition schedule based upon its consideration of all relevant facts and circumstances, in its sole and absolute discretion. In the event the ECNL denies a request or a cancellation, postponement or modification to the schedule and an ECNL Club refuses to participate in a scheduled ECNL Competition, the ECNL may declare a forfeit for one or both ECNL Clubs scheduled to participate.

3.4.2 League Discretion on Post-Season Qualification. The ECNL has the authority to adjust, change and re-determine ECNL Post-Season qualification, seeding and/or eligibility at any time, for any and all teams, at its sole discretion based on Uncontrollable Cancellations or any other factors the ECNL deems relevant. When determining ECNL Post-Season qualifications, the ECNL may consider an ECNL Club’s refusal to participate in scheduled competitions and/or cancellation of scheduled competitions or any other factors the ECNL deems relevant at its discretion.

3.5 Venue and Time.

3.5.1 Process. The game times and venues for all ECNL Competitions must be agreed upon by the participating clubs and reported to the ECNL Commissioner no later than August 20 for the fall, and January 20 for the spring, of each ECNL Season.

3.5.2 ECNL Club Competition or Regional League Competitions. Any changes to ECNL Club Competitions after August 20 must be agreed upon by both ECNL Clubs and the ECNL Commissioner. No changes to ECNL Competitions may be made within 72 hours of kick-off, except due to bad weather or as permitted by the ECNL Commissioner due to exceptional circumstances outside the control of the ECNL Clubs. If an ECNL Competition is canceled or postponed in compliance with the above rules, a new date, time, and venue must be identified by the participating teams within (14) days. For purposes of clarification, the game does not need to be played within 14 days, but a date, venue and time must be selected in that time frame and submitted to the league for review. The ECNL Commissioner must approve any new date proposed, and in doing so will consider the potential Post-Season qualification impacts of a game rescheduled late in the season and require the game to be played earlier. If a new date, venue, and time is not selected and agreed upon within this (14) day time period by the member clubs, the ECNL Commissioner may, at any later date: (i) select the date, time, and venue of the game; (ii) declare the game a non-played game with no points awarded to either club; or (iii) declare the game a forfeit for one or both member clubs

3.5.3 Minimum Standards. ECNL Game Day Minimum Standards are expectations and requirements of hosting ECNL Competition, and this policy is incorporated into these rules.

3.5.4 Athletic Trainer Requirement. The home team shall provide a certified athletic trainer for all ECNL Competitions at U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, and U18/U19, and shall pay costs of this certified athletic trainer. The certified athletic trainer shall be available for both teams from fifteen (15) minutes prior to the first scheduled game until the end of

the last scheduled game of the day, and should be readily available for player needs at each ECNL Competition to which they are assigned.

3.6 Referees. The home club shall be responsible for assigning referees for their home ECNL Competitions, and for payment of referee fees for their home ECNL Competitions based on the minimum pay scale set forth by the ECNL. Clubs may pay above the minimum pay scale if necessary within their market to obtain officials of appropriate quality and experience. If any ECNL Competition is played at a neutral site location, both member clubs/teams involved in the fixture will split payment of the referee costs (50/50), unless the clubs agree on a different arrangement.

3.7 ECNL Competitions in Conjunction with Other Events. In the event that clubs agree to play an ECNL Competition in conjunction with a tournament or other non-ECNL competition, they may do so under the following conditions: (i) there shall be no entry fee paid for the ECNL Competition except a fee that covers the cost of the referees per the ECNL referee pay scale (if any fee is agreed to by the participating teams) and a reasonable field rental fee (if agreed to by the participating teams); (ii) no other games may be played by the players on the same day of an ECNL Competition; and (iii) all ECNL Competition rules related to roster limits, game length, substitutions, etc. must be followed.

3.8 Deadline for ECNL Competitions. All ECNL Competitions must be played by the end of the day on the first Sunday in June of the ECNL Season. The ECNL Commissioner reserves the right to extend this date under extreme circumstances at his/her sole discretion, particularly if a game has an impact on qualification or significant seeding in the ECNL Post-Season. Failure to complete an ECNL Competition by this deadline of the ECNL Season may result in sanctions against the clubs involved. If an ECNL Competition is not played during the ECNL Season or during an extension as allowed above by the ECNL Commissioner, the ECNL Commissioner shall review the circumstances around the original scheduling, re-scheduling, and any other relevant fact and may: (i) schedule the game played at a date, time, and venue of the ECNL Commissioner's choosing; (ii) declare the game a non-played game with no points awarded to either club; or (iii) declare the game a forfeit for one or both clubs).

3.9 Club Conference and Regional League Substitutions. Except as provided in Rule 3.9.2 below, once an ECNL Registered Player is substituted in one half of any ECNL Competition, such ECNL Registered Player may not re-enter the game for the duration of the half. Once an ECNL Registered Player is substituted in one period of overtime of any ECNL Competition, such ECNL Registered Player may not re-enter the game. There shall be a maximum of seven (7) substitutions in any half or in overtime of any ECNL Competition.

3.9.1 Head Injury. Any player suspected of suffering a head injury must be evaluated by a health care professional prior to returning to play. If a player is being evaluated on-site by a health care professional for possible return to play, the player may be temporarily substituted while the evaluation occurs, without the substitution counting against the team's total number of substitutions and without prohibiting re-entry by the player being evaluated if he/she is ultimately cleared. This temporary substitution for evaluation of a potential head injury may take place regardless of whether the team has used all substitutions for the half. For purposes of clarification, if the team has used all eligible substitutions (7) for the half, the team may still substitute a player into the game

who has already been substituted for purposes of this head injury evaluation. For further clarification, if the team has not yet used all eligible substitute players in the half, the temporary substitute must be a player who is still eligible to enter. If the player being evaluated is cleared to continue participation, that player should re-enter the game at the first substitution possible after the clearance decision is made by the health care professional.

3.9.2 **Regular Season ECNL National Events.** Due to the showcasing nature of the matches, there shall be unlimited substitution at all regular season ECNL National Events.

3.10 **Yellow and Red Cards (Players).** Any ECNL Registered Player receiving a red card in an ECNL Competition will be suspended for the remainder of that specific level of ECNL Competition on the day and also for the next day on which that specific level of ECNL Competition is played for any age group. If the next fixture of that level of ECNL Competition has been split by age groups, the player will be suspended for the age group at which the player received the red card, and the other age groups in the fixture, regardless of the date on which they are played. For purposes of clarification, if an ECNL Registered Player receives a red card in an ECNL Club Competition, the ECNL Registered Player will not be eligible to participate in any ECNL Club Competition on the next day of ECNL Club Competition for any team or age group within the ECNL Registered Player's ECNL Member Club. Additional suspension or sanctions may be imposed by the ECNL Commissioner at his / her discretion.

3.11 **Yellow and Red Cards / Ejections (Coaches).** Any coach receiving a red card in, or ejected from, an ECNL Competition will be suspended for (i.) the remainder of that ECNL Competition, (ii.) all other ECNL Competitions on the same day, including both Club Competition or Regional League matches that day, and (iii.) the next ECNL Competition for that age group level and all other ECNL age groups competing at that level of competition (Club Competition or Regional League) that day. Additional suspension or sanctions may be imposed by the ECNL Commissioner at his/her discretion or by the Disciplinary Committee. Any coach with multiple ejections / red cards within the same ECNL Season shall be reviewed for additional suspension or sanction.

3.12 **Red Card Carryover.** Red card suspensions will carry over into subsequent ECNL Seasons if the red card is received in the final ECNL Competition of the current ECNL Season, or if the length of the suspension makes this necessary.

3.13 **Accumulation.** There shall be no yellow card accumulation policy for ECNL Competitions.

3.14 **Player Transfers.**

3.14.1 **Base Rule.** An ECNL Registered Player may not play for more than one club in ECNL Competitions during the ECNL Season, unless: (i) the new club has an available spot on an ECNL Roster; and (ii) the ECNL Commissioner consents to such transfer in writing. The consent of the ECNL Commissioner shall be granted at the ECNL Commissioners' discretion, and will consider, without limitation, the following factors: (i) whether a geographic move by the ECNL Player has occurred; (ii) how many games the ECNL Player has participated in; (iii) what time of the ECNL Season the transfer request is made; (iv) the positions of the ECNL Clubs involved; and (v) other factors surrounding the request. The

ECNL Commissioner shall review the facts and circumstances surrounding the transfer request based upon the best interests of the player and the league, and shall independently determine whether the transfer shall be approved or denied, and if so whether any additional suspension or conditions shall be imposed on the transfer. A player transferred shall be referred to as a "Transferred Player." In all situations, the ECNL Commissioner may: (i) refuse a transfer, (ii) grant a transfer and impose a suspension or sanction, or (iii) grant a transfer with no suspension or sanction, all based on the ECNL Commissioner's review of the facts and circumstances and at the ECNL Commissioner's discretion. A Transferred Player shall be removed from the ECNL Roster(s) of the "former" club.

3.14.2 U18/U19 Finals Transfer Prohibition. No ECNL U18/U19 Registered Player registered to one ECNL Club may be transferred to a Finals qualifying team of another ECNL Club unless documentation is provided to the ECNL Commissioner, to the ECNL Commissioner's satisfaction, showing a family move to a new geographic location prior to May 1 of the current ECNL Season. The ECNL Commissioner reserves the right to approve additional cases (extenuating circumstances) brought forth regarding the transfer request of a U18/U19 player to a Finals qualifying team.

3.14.3 Multiple Program Clubs. A "Multiple Program Club" is an ECNL Club with two programs in ECNL Club Competition. No Multiple Program Club may transfer a player from one of their programs to the other program, at any time, for any reason, at any age group, except for the exemption below. For purposes of clarification, once a player is registered as an ECNL Registered Player with one program in a Multiple Program Club, that player is prohibited from playing with or transferring to the other program of the Multiple Program Club during the same ECNL season.

3.14.3.1 Player Development Exemption. Due to the non-linear nature of player development, each Multiple Program Club may transfer two (2) players from one program to another program at each age group (and vice versa), provided that these transfers are completed before the mid-point of the conference season for the age group for both programs involved in the transfer. A player transferred in this manner may not transfer again within the Multiple Program Club. NOTE: Multiple Program Clubs should confirm the date on which transfers under this rule are not allowed with ECNL Member Services.

3.15 Points. In each ECNL Competition during the ECNL Season, teams shall be awarded three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. A forfeit shall be considered a 3-0 loss for the forfeiting team and a 3-0 win for the non-forfeiting team. The ECNL Commissioner, and only the ECNL Commissioner, may declare an ECNL Competition a forfeit based on the Commissioner's review of the facts and circumstances, and at the Commissioner's discretion.

3.16 Standings. The standings in all ECNL Competitions shall be determined at the end of the ECNL Regular Season (the "Regular Season Standings"). The Regular Season Standings shall determine qualification and seeding for the ECNL Post-Season as determined by the ECNL. Post-Season qualification, eligibility, and seeding may be changed by the ECNL at any time, at the league's discretion. The current ECNL Post-Season structure and qualification process is provided in Exhibit D.

3.17 **Tie-Breakers.** The following tie-breakers will be used for resolving ties between ECNL Teams in determining Regular Season Standings, in the following order:

3.17.1 ECNL Competition Standings:

- If two teams are tied, total points earned in head to head games. If more than Two Teams are tied, this tie-breaker shall not apply and the following shall apply (in order):
- Goal Difference;
- Goals For;
- Goals Against;
- Coin Toss.

3.17.2 ECNL Playoff and Wild Card Qualification:

- If Two Teams are tied, total points earned in head to head games. If more than two teams are tied, this tie-breaker shall not apply, and the following shall apply (in order):
- Goal Difference;
- Goals For;
- Goals Against;
- Coin Toss.

3.17.3 ECNL Post-Season Standings and- Advancement:

- If two teams are tied, total points earned in head to head game. If more than two teams are tied, this tie-breaker shall not apply and the following shall apply (in order):
- Goal Difference (based on group play);
- Goals For (based on group play);
- Goals Against (based on group play);
- Penalties: If it is still tied, the winner shall be determined by kicks from the mark. The winner shall then be the ECNL Team that scores the most in five (5) kicks from the mark. If the teams remain tied after five (5) kicks, the winner shall be determined by sudden death in rounds of one (1) kick per team.

There shall be no cap on goal difference in any ECNL Competition.

3.18 **Game Length.** ECNL Competitions shall be played with the following game length:

U13: 2 x 35 minutes

*U13: 2 x 40 minutes

U14: 2 x 40 minutes

U15: 2 x 40 minutes

U16: 2 x 40 minutes

U17: 2 x 45 minutes

U18/U19: 2 x 45 minutes

The ECNL may adjust game lengths for any ECNL Competition at any time.

*Texas Conference ECNL, RL, RL NTX

4. **ECNL Post-Season**

4.1 **ECNL Post-Season.** All ECNL Teams must participate in the ECNL Post-Season if they qualify. The ECNL Post-Season structure and qualifying process is attached in Exhibit D.

4.2 **ECNL Playoff Groups.** Teams shall be placed in playoff groups for the ECNL Playoffs based upon the Regular Season Standings and the qualification process designated by the ECNL. In the event that inclement weather or other factors prevent group games at the ECNL Postseason from being completed, the ECNL reserves the right to alter schedules and take any other actions necessary to determine winners and advancement at its discretion.

4.3 **Intentionally Omitted.**

4.4 **Overtime.** In the event of a tie at the end of regulation of any ECNL Competition played as part of the ECNL Playoffs or ECNL Finals, overtime procedures will be designated by the ECNL.

4.5 **Overall Club Champion.** At the end of the ECNL Postseason, an Overall ECNL Club Champion will be determined based upon the Final Standings determined by the ECNL. Each ECNL Club will earn points towards the Overall ECNL Club Championship based upon the final position of each ECNL Team in the ECNL Club at the U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, and U18/U19 age groups. The ECNL Club with the most total points from its ECNL Teams, as determined pursuant to this Rule 4.5, shall be crowned the Overall ECNL Club Champion. Each ECNL Club will be ranked based upon the Final Standings in each age group (the "ECNL Club Rankings").

5. **Game Day Procedures**

5.1 An official ECNL Match Report must be completed for each ECNL Competition.

5.1.1 Both the home and away team must provide the ECNL Match Report for all ECNL Competitions. The ECNL Match Report may be accessed via the TGS website.

5.2 The names of any players playing up or who are not automatically populated in the ECNL Match Report must be written on the ECNL Match Report. Regardless of the number of players listed on an ECNL Match Report, no more than eighteen (18) players shall be eligible to appear in the ECNL Competition, and all players must be ECNL Registered Players.

5.3 The ECNL Match Report must be completed in full, signed by both teams, and uploaded by the home team into TGS within twenty-four (24) hours of completion of the ECNL Competition. No changes to the Match Report may be made once the game has kicked off – any player listed on the Match Report will be fixture-tied at that point.

5.4 For ECNL National Event Competition or ECNL Post-Season Competition, the ECNL Match Report must be completed in full and signed by both teams upon conclusion of the game. The referee will submit the ECNL Match Report to the designated ECNL contact immediately upon conclusion of the competition.

5.5 All participating teams must comply with ECNL Game Day Minimum Standards.

6. **Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Committee**

6.1 **Code of Conduct.** The ECNL has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse or misconduct and is committed to maintaining a competition and daily developmental environment free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of any legally protected status. Accordingly, the ECNL does not permit any form of harassment, discrimination or intimidation on

account of race, skin color, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, age, marital status, ancestry, citizenship, veteran's status, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. This policy also prohibits harassment on the basis of the protected status of an individual's relatives, friends or associates. The ECNL is also committed to maintaining a competition and daily development environment free from all forms of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, bullying and hazing. The ECNL Code of Conduct is binding on all ECNL Member Clubs, including the players, parents, coaches, club and team administrators, directors, officers, employees, individuals travelling as a member of a team delegation, and any individual affiliated with an ECNL Member Club (together, the "ECNL Participants").

6.2 US Club Soccer and Reporting Incidents. The ECNL is sanctioned by US Club Soccer. Accordingly, all ECNL Participants are responsible for knowing and complying with all US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules. ECNL Participants should be familiar with and must specifically comply with US Club Soccer Policy Section 13 – Athlete and Participant Safety/Risk Management and the US Club Soccer Prohibited Conduct Policy, which govern the activities of ECNL Member Clubs, including, but not limited to, practices, training sessions, scrimmages, sanctioned league and tournament activities, team travel, and applicable off-field activities. Any violation of the US Club Soccer Policy Section 13 and/or the Prohibited Conduct Policy may subject the ECNL Participants to disciplinary action by US Club Soccer. Any ECNL Participant that is aware or has reason to suspect abuse or other misconduct in violation of the US Club Soccer Prohibited Conduct Policy should report the incident to US Club Soccer via its online reporting mechanism available at <https://usclubsoccer.org/resources/members-area/safety/report-a-concern/>. Reports may be made anonymously and there is no direct fee or cost involved in making a report. ECNL Participants are encouraged to err on the side of reporting incidents and to allow US Club Soccer to ascertain whether a suspension, disqualification from participation, or other disciplinary action is warranted.

6.3 Incidents During ECNL Sanctioned Competitions or Events. ECNL Participants should report abuse, misconduct or violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct that occur during ECNL Competitions or events, including any prohibited conduct directed towards any ECNL Participant(s), or any vendors, customers or third parties present during ECNL Competitions or events. The ECNL cannot act to eliminate misconduct unless it has notice of the conduct. ECNL Participants are therefore responsible for promptly reporting any concerns regarding compliance with and/or violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct to the ECNL during or immediately following the ECNL Competition or event where the incident(s) occurred so that the ECNL may properly investigate the incident and determine what, if any, action is warranted. Reports of violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct may be made verbally to the ECNL Event Director present on site (or to the highest ranking ECNL staff member on site, if any) and should be submitted in writing by email and sent to the ECNL Commissioner. Incidents should be reported to the ECNL Commissioner no later than seven (7) days after the completion of the ECNL Competition or event where the incident(s) occurred. Incident reports received more than 7 days after the completion of the ECNL Competition or event will be reported to US Club Soccer as set forth in Section 6.2.

6.4 ECNL Disciplinary Committee. Any matter brought before the Commissioner through submission of an Incident Report shall be addressed and responded to at the discretion of the Commissioner. For alleged violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct, the ECNL Commissioner

shall, at his or her discretion, appoint a Disciplinary Committee as provided in **Exhibit B**. The ECNL Disciplinary Committee shall determine the appropriate sanctions or disciplinary action to be enforced for violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct.

6.5 **Protests and Appeals.** There will be no protests or appeals of decisions made in ECNL Competitions or by the ECNL Commissioner. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any decision by the ECNL Disciplinary Committee that results in the suspension of a player or coach that is not due to issuance of a red card may be appealed to US Club Soccer, and then to the US Soccer Federation. Any hearing for such appeal shall be conducted pursuant to the applicable US Club Soccer and US Soccer Federation policies and procedures.

6.6 **Matters Not Provided For.** Any matter not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the ECNL Board of Directors. All decisions by the ECNL Board of Directors addressing such matters are final.

Exhibit A:

2023-2024 ECNL Age Group Eligibility

ECNL age groups for the 2022-2023 ECNL Season are provided below:

U18/U19 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2005

U17 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2007

U16 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2008

U15 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2009

U14 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2010

U13 Age Group: Born on or after 1/1/2011

Players may play for their own age group and for “older” age groups

Exhibit B:
ECNL DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

The ECNL Disciplinary Committee-, when convened by the ENCL Commissioner, determines sanctions and discipline for violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct.

Any individual may report a potential violation of the Code of Conduct to the ECNL Commissioner. Reports of violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct may be made verbally to the ECNL Event Director present on site (or to the highest ranking ECNL staff member on site, if any), and should also be submitted in writing and must be received by the ECNL Commissioner within seven (7) days of the alleged incident (the "Report"). The Report can be anonymous, but must be in sufficient detail as to clearly apprise the ECNL Commissioner of the nature of the violation, including without limitation when and where it allegedly occurred, and should include identification of any witnesses. Any reports of referee assault or abuse sent to the ECNL Commissioner are the direct jurisdiction of US Club Soccer, and will be referred directly to US Club Soccer for hearing. The ECNL Disciplinary Committee may also enforce sanctions related to referee assault or abuse as it relates to violations of the ECNL Code of Conduct.

Once a Report meeting these requirements is received by the ECNL, the ECNL Commissioner may convene an ECNL Disciplinary Committee to investigate the allegation and take whatever action the Disciplinary Committee determines is warranted in response to the Report. Each Disciplinary Committee shall be comprised of the ECNL Commissioner and 2 Members from the ECNL Board of Directors.

The Disciplinary Committee shall investigate the allegations in the Report to determine what occurred. This investigation may include, without limitation, reports and interviews with the any ECNL Participant, any match official, or any other observer. The Disciplinary Committee may consider all circumstances of the allegation, including the situation, the severity of the offense, aggravating and mitigating factors, and the history of the individuals or ECNL Member Club involved. The Disciplinary Committee shall give the person(s) against whom the Report is directed an opportunity to be heard regarding the allegations in the Report.

The Disciplinary Committee, at its discretion, may provide the person(s) against whom the Report is directed a copy of the actual Report. In exercising its discretion-, the Disciplinary Committee shall consider such person's need to know the substance of the allegations in the Report and the potential chilling effect of releasing the identity of the complainant(s), as well as other factors. Within 21 days of the receipt of the Report, the Disciplinary Committee shall make a determination as to whether the Code of Conduct was violated and shall enforce any and all of the following specified sanctions, without limitation:

- Written reprimand and probationary status for a specified period of time
- Mandatory attendance in an anger management class
- Suspension of up to six (6) games to be enforced effective immediately upon determination
- Monetary fine imposed against the ECNL Member Club
- Points deduction from the ECNL Team or ECNL Member Club
- Recommended expulsion of the ECNL Participant from the ECNL

The Disciplinary Committee decision shall be final within the ECNL. The determination of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to US Club Soccer; US Club Soccer may hear the appeal or defer the appeal directly to the US Soccer Federation. All other US Soccer Federation rules and policies, including

without limitation requirements regarding exhaustion of administrative remedies shall apply to findings of the Disciplinary Committee.

A recommendation for expulsion from the ECNL must be reviewed by the ECNL Board of Directors. The recommendation shall stand unless overturned by a majority vote of the ECNL Board of Directors, in which case the maximum suspension shall be immediately enforced.

There shall be “zero tolerance” for multiple violations of the Code of Conduct. Zero tolerance means that a written reprimand and/or probationary status shall be insufficient sanctions for a finding of a second violation of the Code of Conduct by any person occurring within any twelve (12) month period. Further, it means that a member of the ECNL Board of Directors will be held to a higher standard of conduct. A member of the ECNL Board of Directors who is found to have violated the Code of Conduct shall make a personal apology to the person(s) affected by the violation satisfactory to the ECNL Board of Directors, or be removed from the Board of Directors. Any member of the ECNL Board of Directors who is suspended by the Disciplinary Committee for any amount of games for violations of the Code of Conduct shall be immediately removed from the Board of Directors and prohibited from holding a seat in the future. Any member of the ECNL Board of Directors that receives more than one written reprimand in their term by the Disciplinary Committee shall be immediately removed from the Board of Directors and prohibited from holding a seat in the future.

Exhibit C

Designated Tryout Dates

Designated Tryout Dates may vary by location, and provide the first date on which ECNL Clubs may recruit, train, or tryout ECNL Registered Players from other ECNL Clubs. Unless specified otherwise below, the Designated Tryout Date for ECNL Clubs is May 1st of that season.

The following areas have different Designated Tryout Dates:

- **Virginia.** All ECNL Clubs located in the state of Virginia have a Designated Tryout Date of March 1. This applies to all ECNL Registered Players in both the ECNL Club Competition and the ECNL Regional League.
- **Midwest Girls Conference and Heartland Regional League.** All ECNL Girls Clubs in the Midwest Conference or in the Heartland Regional League have a Designated Tryout Date of February 1. This applies to all ECNL Registered Players in both the ECNL Club Competition and the ECNL Regional League.
- **Southwest (BOYS ONLY).** All ECNL Boys Clubs in the Southwest Conference and Social Regional League have a Designated Tryout Date of April 1. This applies to all ECNL Registered Players in both the ECNL Club Competition and the ECNL Regional League.
- **Texas Girls Conference and Texas, North Texas, and USC Regional Leagues.** All ECNL Girls Clubs in the Texas Conference or in the Texas, North Texas, and USC Regional Leagues have a Designated Tryout Date of May 15. This applies to all ECNL Registered Players in both the ECNL Club Competition and the ECNL Regional League.