



2026-2027 ORL PRE-ECNL OHIO VALLEY COMPETITION RULES

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These Pre-ECNL Ohio Valley Conference Rules and Regulations (the “Regulations”) outline the rules for the Pre-ECNL Ohio Valley Conference Competition (as defined below).

1. **Definitions**

- 1.1 “ECNL” means the Elite Clubs National League.
- 1.2 “Pre-ECNL” means the Pre-Elite Clubs National League.
- 1.3 “OVC” means the Ohio Valley Conference.
- 1.4 “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, and as a distinction, “ECNL Club” includes both ECNL Member Clubs and clubs participating in the ECNL Regional League.
- 1.5 “ECNL Non-Member Club” means a club participating in the Pre-ECNL Ohio Valley Conference but not an “ECNL Member Club”
- 1.6 **Competitions.** “Pre-ECNL Competition” means ECNL Clubs and ECNL Non-Member Clubs may opt to have teams participate in designated “Pre-ECNL” competitions at U12 and younger. 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. All Final registration must be completed on the Athlete One Registration Platform.
- 1.7 **Teams.** “Pre-ECNL Team” means “ECNL Member Club Teams” and “ECNL Non-Member Club Teams that collectively participate in the Pre-ECNL Ohio Valley Conference.
- 1.8 “Pre-ECNL Match Report” means the official match report that must be completed for all Pre-ECNL OVC Competitions as provided in Section 5 of these Regulations.
- 1.9 Intentionally Omitted.
- 1.10 “Pre-ECNL Registered Player” means a player on a Pre-ECNL Team’s Roster, and includes teams in Pre-ECNL OVC Club Competition. Pre-ECNL Registered Players must be registered with US Club Soccer (in the Pre-ECNL).
- 1.11 “Pre-ECNL Roster” means the roster of a Pre-ECNL Team in a Pre-ECNL Competition.
- 1.12 “Pre-ECNL Season” means the competitive season beginning August 1 of each year and ending July 31 of the following year.

2. Pre-ECNL OVC Roster Rules and Team Requirements

2.1 Age Groups and Roster Maximums.

2.1.1 **Initial Roster.** All players registered for Pre-ECNL Competition have an “Initial Roster” for the Pre-ECNL Season, which is the roster of the first team on which they are registered. The Initial Roster is used for determining maximum player counts.

2.1.2 **Pre-ECNL OVC Competition Age Groups.** U9-U12 Age groups per gender are offered in the Pre-ECNL OVC. Pre-ECNL OVC Clubs are not required to field a team in all four age groups (U9-U12) of Pre-ECNL OVC Competition.

2.1.3 **Roster Maximums.** A maximum of thirty (30) players may be rostered on any Pre-ECNL OVC Team’s Roster (in any age group). Once a player is added to a Pre-ECNL OVC Team’s Roster, that is considered the player’s Initial Roster, and the player shall count against the roster maximum for that team.

2.1.4 **Roster Minimums.** A minimum of seven (7) players must be rostered on any Pre-ECNL OVC Team’s Roster (in any age group).

2.2 **Player Registration and Intra-Club Roster Movement.** All players on any Pre-ECNL Roster must be ECNL Registered Players, using the process required by the ECNL.

2.2.1 **Player Movement Between League Competitions.** Pre-ECNL OVC players may participate in up to 2 Pre-ECNL competitions per day, or may participate in 1 Pre-ECNL competition and 1 ECNL/ECNL RL competition per day.

- NOTE: Any Pre-ECNL player who is rostered in the ECNL/ECNL RL at U13 or above will be subject to all other ECNL rules and regulations regarding tryouts, rosters and fixtures for ECNL Competitions at U13 and above.

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

2.3 **Pre-ECNL OVC Game Day Roster.** It is the responsibility of each Pre-ECNL OVC Club to know and comply with all Pre-ECNL OVC Competition Rules and to ensure that all players on a Pre-ECNL OVC Competition game day roster are eligible according to these Regulations. While flexibility in making roster adjustments on game day is provided by the ECNL in order to allow maximum flexibility to Pre-ECNL Clubs, every player added to any game day roster must be eligible and comply with all Pre-ECNL roster rules.

- **7v7:** A maximum of fourteen (14) Pre-ECNL Registered Players from a Pre-ECNL Team’s Roster will be eligible for each 7v7 game in Pre-ECNL OVC Competition (the “Game Day Roster”).
- **9v9:** A maximum of sixteen (16) Pre-ECNL Registered Players from a Pre-ECNL Team’s Roster will be eligible for each 9v9 game in Pre-ECNL OVC Competition (the “Game Day Roster”).
- **11v11:** A maximum of eighteen (18) Pre-ECNL Registered Players from a Pre-ECNL Team’s Roster will be eligible for each game in Pre-ECNL OVC Competition (the “Game Day Roster”).
- All participating players in any Pre-ECNL OVC Competition must appear on the Game Day Roster and Pre-ECNL OVC Match Report and must be Pre-ECNL Registered Players. Once

a player appears on a Game Day Roster, the player will be deemed to have played in an ECNL Competition. Any additional roster adds for that day are governed by Rule 2.2.1.

2.4 Pre-ECNL OVC Roster Sizes; Ball Size; Half Lengths.

2.4.1 U9-U10

- 7v7
- Team Roster Max: 30 players
- Game Day Roster Max: 14 players
- Size 4 Ball
- 25 minute halves | 5 minute halftime

2.4.2 U11-U12

- 9v9
- Team Roster Max: 30 players
- Game Day Roster Max: 16 players
- Size 4 Ball
- 30 minute halves | 5 minute halftime

2.4.3 U12 (Spring 2026 Only)

- 11v11
- Team Roster Max: 30 players
- Game Day Roster Max: 18 players
- Size 5 Ball
- 35 minute halves | 10 minute halftime

2.5 Pre-ECNL OVC Referee Fees. Pre-ECNL OVC Referee Fees will be posted on the Ohio River League Website at www.theohioriverleague.com. Each team is responsible for half of the Total Referee Fees due per game.

2.6 Intentionally Omitted.

2.7 Recruiting; Tryouts. Players registered in the Pre-ECNL OVC are not covered by ECNL Rule 2.13 regarding recruiting, tryouts and registration (See ECNL Competition Rules).

3. Pre-ECNL OVC 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.

3.2.1 The Pre-ECNL OVC will operate Divisions in Fall and Spring for both boys and girls. Boys cannot be rostered on girls teams.

3.2.2 Each season (Fall & Spring), the Pre-ECNL OVC will create different playing levels per age group per gender and will bracket teams in divisions based on level of play and geography.

3.2.3 The number of teams in each division per age group per gender will be determined by the Pre-ECNL OVC.

3.2.4 The number of games each team will play during each season will depend upon the number of teams in each bracket determined by the Pre-ECNL OVC.

3.2.5 Once the Pre-ECNL OVC determines the divisions/brackets, each team will be responsible for self-scheduling within the timeframe determined by the Pre-ECNL OVC.

3.2.6 Clubs/Teams who do not honor the commitment to the Pre-ECNL OVC schedules and prioritization of the Pre-ECNL OVC Schedule may be removed from the league or non-renewed for future seasons.

3.3 **7v7 and 9v9 Playing Rules.**

3.3.1 7v7 Playing Rules

3.3.1.1 Field Dimensions should be 55-65 yards long and 35-45 yards wide

3.3.1.2 Penalty areas will be reduced based on 3.3.1.1

3.3.1.3 Goal sizes may be 6-7 feet high and 12-21 feet wide

3.3.1.4 Maximum number of players on the field is 7, one of which is the goalkeeper

3.3.1.5 A team may not play with less than five (5) players on the field

3.3.1.6 A Build Out line is used in the Pre-ECNL OVC. **This is new for 26-27.** Offside is consistent with the FIFA Offside Law in line with all other age groups

3.3.1.7 The Goalkeeper is permitted to punt, drop-kick, pass, throw or roll the ball into play

3.3.1.8 Heading is not permitted for any player

3.3.2 9v9 Playing Rules

3.3.2.1 Field Dimensions will be 70-80 yards long and 45-55 yards wide

3.3.2.2 Penalty areas will be reduced based on 3.3.2.1

3.3.2.3 Goal size is 6.5-7 feet high and 18-21 feet wide

3.3.2.4 Maximum number of players on the field is 9, one of which is the goalkeeper

3.3.2.5 A team may not play with less than six (6) players on the field

3.3.2.6 Heading is not permitted for U11 and under players

3.4 **Canceled Matches.** If any Pre-ECNL OVC Match is canceled without starting, or without reaching halftime during any Pre-ECNL OVC match, the match shall be rescheduled. If any Pre-ECNL OVC match needs to be rescheduled, it is the responsibility of the teams to notify the Pre-ECNL OVC of the canceled match and the reschedule details. If the Pre-ECNL OVC determines that it is impossible to reschedule such canceled Pre-ECNL OVC match, the Pre-ECNL OVC match 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 3.3, the Pre-ECNL OVC may alter the method by which Pre-ECNL OVC standings

are determined for impacted age groups. Any Pre-ECNL OVC match that reaches halftime before being canceled shall be considered a completed game.

3.5 Referees. The home club shall be responsible for assigning referees for their home Pre-ECNL OVC Competitions per the Referee Fee pay-scale set forth by the Pre-ECNL OVC. Pre-ECNL OVC Referee Fees will be posted on the Ohio River League Website at www.theohioriverleague.com. Each team is responsible for half of the Total Referee Fees due per game.

3.6 Substitutions. There is Unlimited Substitutions at all Pre-ECNL OVC matches.

3.7 Disciplinary Action - (Players). Any Pre-ECNL OVC or ECNL Registered Player receiving a red card in a Pre-ECNL OVC competition will be suspended for the remainder of that specific level of Pre-ECNL OVC competition on the day and also for the next day on which that specific level of Pre-ECNL OVC competition is played for any age group. If the next fixture of that level of Pre-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 a Pre-ECNL OVC Registered Player receives a red card in a Pre-ECNL OVC Competition, the Pre-ECNL OVC Registered Player will not be eligible to participate in any ECNL Competition on the next day of ECNL Competition for any team or age group within the ECNL Registered Player's ECNL Member Club. Additional suspension or sanctions for red cards, yellow cards or incidents that were not carded at the time but were observed on video review may be imposed by the Pre-ECNL OVC at their discretion, including without limitation suspension across all levels of ECNL Competition.

3.8 Disciplinary Action - (Coaches). Any coach receiving a red card in, or ejected from, a Pre-ECNL Competition will be suspended for (i.) the remainder of that Pre-ECNL Competition, (ii.) all other ECNL Competitions on the same day, including both ECNL/ECNL RL matches that day, and (iii.) the next Pre-ECNL OVC Competition for that age group level and all other ECNL age groups competing at that level of competition (ECNL/ECNL RL) that day. Additional suspension or sanctions for red cards, yellow cards or incidents that were not carded at the time but were observed on video review may be imposed by the Pre-ECNL OVC Commissioner at their discretion. Any coach with multiple ejections / red cards or video sanctions within the same Pre-ECNL Season shall be reviewed for additional suspension or sanction by a Disciplinary Committee as outlined in **Exhibit B (See ECNL Competition Rules)**.

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

3.10 Accumulation. There shall be no yellow card accumulation policy for Pre-ECNL OVC Competitions.

3.11 Points; Standings; Tie-Breakers.

3.11.1 Points. In each Pre-ECNL OVC Competition during the Pre-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 4-0 loss for the forfeiting team and a 4-0 win for the non-forfeiting team. The Pre-ECNL OVC may declare a Pre-ECNL OVC Competition a forfeit based on the League's review of the facts and circumstances.

3.11.2 Standings. The standings in the Pre-ECNL OVC shall be determined at the end of each Pre-ECNL OVC Regular Season (Fall & Spring).

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

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

4. Game Day Procedures

4.1 An official Pre-ECNL OVC Match Report must be completed on-site for each ECNL Competition via the ECNL App and Athlete One.

4.2 No more than eighteen (18) players shall be eligible to appear in any Pre-ECNL OVC Competition, and all players must be Pre-ECNL OVC Registered Players.

4.3 All participating teams must comply with Pre-ECNL OVC Game Day Minimum Standards.

5. Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Committee and Appeals

5.1 **Code of Conduct.** The ECNL/ECNL RL/Pre-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/ECNL RL/Pre-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/ECNL RL/Pre-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/ECNL RL/Pre-ECNL Code of Conduct is binding on all ECNL/ECNL RL & Pre-ECNL Clubs and Teams, including the players, parents, coaches, club and team administrators, directors, officers, employees, individuals traveling as a member of a team delegation, and any individual affiliated with an ECNL/ECNL RL/Pre-ECNL Club or Team.

5.2 **US Club Soccer and Reporting Incidents.** The Pre-ECNL OVC is sanctioned by US Club Soccer. Accordingly, all Pre-ECNL OVC Participants are responsible for knowing and complying with all US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies and Rules. Pre-ECNL OVC 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 Pre-ECNL Clubs and Teams, 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 Pre-ECNL OVC Participants to disciplinary action by US Club Soccer. Any Pre-ECNL OVC 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. Pre-ECNL OVC 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.

5.3 Protests and Appeals. Any protests or appeals must be documented in writing and emailed to the Pre-ECNL OVC Director. Only questions related to the qualifications of competitors or the application of the rules shall be referred to the Pre-ECNL OVC Director. Decisions of the Pre-ECNL OVC Director on all matters of protest shall be final.

5.4 Violations of Rules. Any and all violations of Roster Rules, Competition Rules, and/or Code of Conduct set for herein may subject a Club, a Team, its coach(es), or its player(s) to disciplinary action by the Pre-ECNL OVC.

5.5 Matters Not Provided For. Any matter not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the Pre-ECNL OVC. All decisions by the Pre-ECNL OVC addressing such matters are final. The Pre-ECNL OVC reserves the right to amend or modify these Rules during the course of the Pre-ECNL OVC Season with immediate effect.

Exhibit A:

2026-2027 Pre-ECNL OVC Age Group Eligibility

Pre-ECNL OVC age groups for the 2026-2027 ECNL Season are provided below:

- U9 Age Group | Born on or after 8/1/2017
- U10 Age Group | Born on or after 8/1/2016
- U11 Age Group | Born on or after 8/1/2015
- U12 Age Group | Born on or after 8/1/2014

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