



# Technical Standards 2023-24

## General

### Ages:

- U13-U19

### Playoff Ages:

- U15-U19

### High School Participation:

- High school soccer is not permitted by Primary Players

### Outside Competition - Events:

- Teams may only participate in approved outside tournaments, showcases, or events
- Requests can be made through filing out the Outside Competition Form. MLS NEXT Staff will evaluate each request according to their consistency with the Technical Standards, schedule, and commercial conflicts

### Outside Competition - Leagues:

- Primary Players are not permitted to participate in outside Leagues

### Outside Talent Identification:

- Primary Players may only participate in approved outside talent identification events with U.S. Soccer and CSA National Teams, including USSF Talent ID Centers



# Technical Standards 2023-24

## Rosters

### Roster Minimum:

- 14 Primary Players per Team

### Roster Maximum:

- Maximum of 24 player average per MLS NEXT team within a club (ex. U15 can have 25 players and U17 can have 23 players)

### Matchday Roster:

- 18 players per Team

### Over-age Players:

- Maximum of 3 over age players (i.e., birth year of 2003) on the U19 roster are permitted
- Players cannot be registered as Late Developers

### Start Percentage:

- All Ages: Recommend that all Primary Players start in 25% of official matches
- U13, U14 & U15: Recommend that all players participate in 50% of minutes per week

### Playing Up:

- Players are eligible to play in an older age group while being rostered in their younger birth year age group, so long as they meet competition standards and play only 90 minutes per day across a maximum of 2 matches



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### Primary Adds:

- Primary Adds are Primary Players added after the close of the initial registration period
- Six (6) Primary Adds per team (average across club) in platform to be allocated by the club
- If a player signs a professional contract with a team within the club or another club in MLS NEXT, the club will not be charged with an "add" to replace that player and the club will receive an extra roster spot to replace them

### Future & Guest Player Adds:

- No limit to the number of adds if compliant with Roster Rules

### Designation Change:

- Any sort of designation change during the season will count towards the 6 Primary Adds

### Roster Freeze:

- The deadline to make any additional adds is ***Thursday, May 24th, 2024***



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## Designations

### Primary (P) Players:

- Top players at each club are expected only to be registered with MLS NEXT
- Not permitted to play with another team within the club at any level outside of MLS NEXT
- Not permitted to play middle or high school soccer

### Future (FR) Players:

- No limit to number of players if compliant with Roster Rules
- Able to participate in outside competition ***within their MLS NEXT club***
- Able to participate in middle or high school soccer
- Can play up to 12 MLS NEXT matches during the Regular Season. Eligible for all MLS NEXT Events

### Guest (G) Player:

- Two (2) players per age group from any club
- Players can participate in 2 matches per season

### Late Developers (L):

- Three (3) Late Developers per team - Late Developers can only be Primary Players
- All age groups are eligible
- Must complete Late Developer forms and receive approval from MLS NEXT



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## Staff

### Staff Requirements:

- Academy Director must have USSF Academy Director Course, EFCL Certificate or USSF/CSA A license or equivalent
- Academy Head Coach must have B License or equivalent (exceptions must be approved by MLS NEXT Technical Director)
- Recommended best practice: Head Coaches should have additional Assistant Coaches, especially if coaching more than one team
- Recommended best practice: A coach shouldn't be Head coach of more than one team, but can be a Head coach on one team and an assistant on other teams

### Matchday Staff:

- Maximum of 5 coaching staff members permitted in technical area and must be listed on the Digital Match Roster within Kitman Labs. (Not including Qualified Medical Professional or ATC)
- There must be a minimum of two (2) registered staff members in the technical area for each match
- Any Staff members that will be working with MLS NEXT players or will be in the technical area during MLS NEXT matches will be required to complete the entire registration process



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## Competition

### Match Timeframe:

- Players can only play in 90 minutes per day across a maximum of 2 matches
- Players should not appear in more than 2 consecutive matchdays

### Match Ball:

- Size 5 Official MLS NEXT Adidas match ball must be used for all U14 – U19 MLS NEXT matches  
Size 4 Official MLS NEXT Adidas match ball must be used for all U13 MLS NEXT matches

### Hydration:

- Home club must provide adequate hydration for both teams

### Technical Area:

- Home club must provide adequate seating (benches) for both teams

### Athletic Trainer:

- Home club must provide a Qualified Medical Professional (QMP) for all venues
- If both teams arrive at the field and the Home team does not provide a QMP, the match will not be played, and the home team will receive a forfeit and fine



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### Match Video:

- Home club must upload match footage for U15 - U19 age groups to video platform and/or analysis provider by 12pm EST on the Tuesday after matches. U13 & U14 match footage is recommended but not required

### Spectators:

- Home club must ensure there are no spectators/parents in the technical area or that sideline.
- Each club is responsible for the behavior of their spectators

### Match Length:

- U13 = 2 x 35 minute halves, 10 minutes HT
- U14 & U15 = 2 x 40 minute halves, 15 minutes HT
- U16, U17, U19 = 2x45 minute halves, 15 minutes HT

### Warm Up Periods:

- Teams must be provided with an appropriate warm up area 30 minutes prior to kick off

### Age Group Order:

- Recommended that older age groups play first to accommodate younger players "playing up"

### Multiple Matches at Once:

- No more than 2 matches played simultaneously between two clubs

### Kick Off Times:

- No earlier than 9:00 AM without permission from MLS NEXT Staff



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### Time between Matches:

- Minimum of 18 hours between matches if playing on consecutive days

### Matchday Roster:

- Maximum of 18 players and minimum of 14 players on match day rosters

### Substitutions:

- U13 & U14 = Unlimited over 3 moments per half, plus HT. No re-entry per half
- U15 and up = Unlimited over 3 moments per match, plus HT. No re entry
- ***Exceptions according to Concussion Protocol***

### Match Changes:

- MLS NEXT must approve any request for schedule changes
- Any requests for substantial changes in time or location received within two weeks of the match will result in a fine





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## Discipline

### Red Cards:

- Red Card accumulation will follow a player and staff member across all age groups
- Red Card accumulation for staff:
  - 1st offense = 2 match suspension
  - 2nd offense = subject to additional discipline
  - 3rd offense = Subject to additional discipline and potential long term suspension
  - Red Cards received in friendly matches will only result in suspension if deemed egregious

### Yellow Cards:

- Yellow Card accumulation will follow a player and staff member across all age groups
- In the event a player or staff member receives 2 yellow cards in the same match resulting in a red card, only the first yellow card counts towards yellow card accumulation.
- Yellow Card Accumulation for players:
  - 5 Yellow Cards (YC) = 1 match;
  - 10 YC = 2 additional matches;
  - 15 YC = 3 additional matches
- Yellow Card Accumulation for staff:
  - 3 Yellow Cards (YC) = 1 match;
  - 5 YC = 2 additional matches;
  - 6 YC = 3 additional matches

### Discipline within Fixture

- If a player receives a Yellow Card in two different matches within the same fixture, both cards will count towards their Yellow Card accumulation.
- If a player receives a Red Card in the first match of a split fixture, then they will not be able to appear in the rest of the matches in the fixture.



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### Fixture:

- When two clubs play against each other across multiple age groups over one weekend, then all matches between the two clubs are considered part of the fixture.



# Technical Standards 2023-24

## Facilities & Training

### Field Standards for Matches:

- Expectations for MLS NEXT clubs to provide appropriate, high quality fields to host MLS NEXT matches
- Minimum Field Sizes:
  - U13 & U14 = Minimum of 64x105
  - U15 & Older = Minimum of 70x110
- Any fields outside of these standards, must be approved by MLS NEXT staff before the season

### Match Locations:

- Clubs can use multiple locations for MLS NEXT Regular Season matches, subject to MLS NEXT approval
- MLS NEXT encourages neutral sites to prevent overnight stays when applicable

### Training:

- U13 must train a minimum of 3 times per week
- U14 & up must train a minimum of 4 times per week

### Rest Day:

- Individual players must be given at least one day off per week