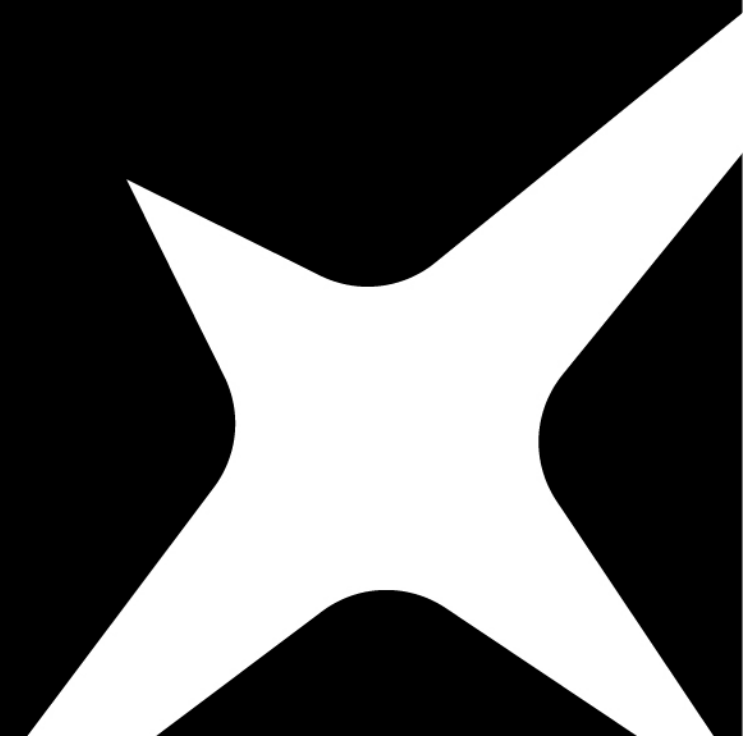
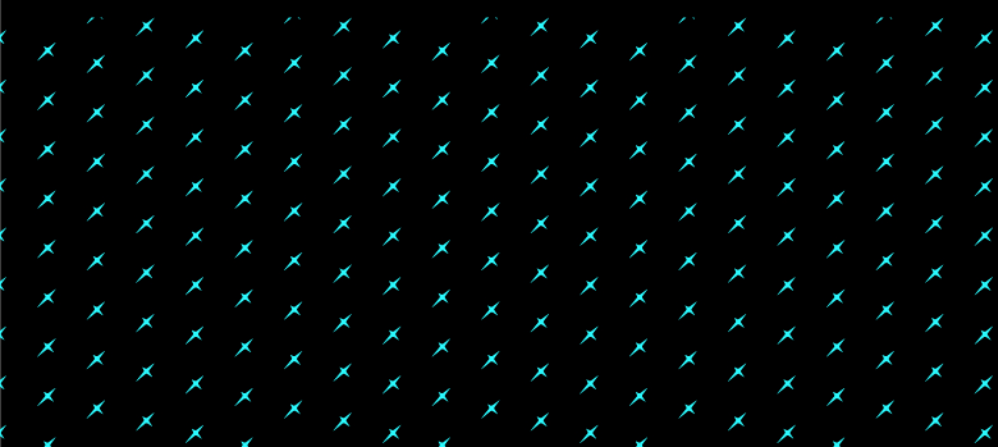




MLS NEXT Technical Standards 2024-25





General

Category	Standard
Ages	U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19
Playoff Ages	U15, U16, U17, U19
High School Participation	High school soccer is not permitted by Primary Players
College Player Participation	Players who have participated or are participating in any college program at any level (Division I, Junior College, etc.) are not permitted to participate in MLS NEXT.
Professional Player Participation	An MLS NEXT age-eligible Player who competes with an MLS NEXT Club's professional team, is permitted to participate in MLS NEXT so long as this player meets all MLS NEXT registration requirements and participates with the Club that is registered in MLS NEXT regardless of the player's contractual status.
Outside Competition - Events	<p>Teams may only participate in approved outside tournaments, showcases, or events</p> <p>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</p>
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



Rosters

Category	Standard
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
Overage Players	Maximum of 3 overage players (i.e., birth year of 2005) 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



Rosters

Category	Standard
Primary Adds	<p>Primary Adds are Primary Players added after the close of the initial registration period</p> <p>Six (6) Primary Adds per team (average across club) in platform to be allocated by the club</p> <p>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</p>
Future & Guest Player Adds	<p>No limit to the number of adds if compliant with Roster Rules</p>
Designation Change	<p>Any sort of designation change during the season will count towards the 6 Primary Adds</p> <p>Players can only change their designation once per season</p>
Roster Freeze	<p>The deadline to make any additional adds is <u>Thursday, May 22nd, 2025</u></p>
Player Movement	<p>Players can not move back and forth between clubs more than once.</p>



Designations

Category	Standard
Primary (P) Players	<p>Top players at each club are expected only to be registered with MLS NEXT</p> <p>Not permitted to play with another team within the club at any level outside of MLS NEXT</p> <p>Not permitted to play middle or high school soccer</p> <p>Must have a minimum of 14 Primary Players per team</p>
Future (F) Players	<p>No limit to number of players if compliant with Roster Rules</p> <p>Able to participate in outside competition <u>within their MLS NEXT club</u></p> <p>Able to participate in middle or high school soccer</p> <p>Can play up to 12 MLS NEXT matches during the Regular Season. Eligible for all MLS NEXT Events</p>
Guest (G) Player	<p>Two (2) players per age group from any club</p> <p>Players can participate in 2 matches per season</p>
Late Developers (L)	<p>Three (3) Late Developers can be approved per age group – Late Developers can only be Primary Players</p> <p>All age groups are eligible</p> <p>Must complete Late Developer forms and receive approval from MLS NEXT</p>



Staff

Category	Standard
Staff Requirements	<p>Academy Director must have USSF Academy Director Course, EFCL Certificate or USSF/CSA A license or equivalent</p> <p>Academy Head Coach must have B License or equivalent (exceptions must be approved by MLS NEXT Technical Director)</p> <p>Recommended best practice: Head Coaches should have additional Assistant Coaches, especially if coaching more than one team</p> <p>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</p>
Matchday Staff	<p>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)</p> <p>There must be a minimum of two (2) registered staff members in the technical area for each match</p> <p>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</p>



Competition

Category	Standard
Match Timeframe	<p>Players can only play in 90 minutes per day across a maximum of 2 matches</p> <p>Players should not appear in more than 2 consecutive matchdays</p>
Match Ball	<p>Size 5 Official MLS NEXT Adidas match ball must be used for all U14 – U19 MLS NEXT matches</p> <p>Size 4 Official MLS NEXT Adidas match ball must be used for all U13 MLS NEXT matches</p>
Hydration	<p>Home club must provide adequate hydration for both teams</p>
Technical Area	<p>Home club must provide adequate seating (benches) for both teams</p>
Athletic Trainer	<p>Home club must provide a Qualified Medical Professional (QMP) for all venues</p> <p>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</p>
Match Video	<p>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</p>
Spectators	<p>Home club must ensure there are no spectators/parents in the technical area or that sideline.</p> <p>Each club is responsible for the behavior of their spectators</p>



Competition

Category	Standard
Match Length	U13 = 2x35 minute halves, 10 minutes HT U14 & U15 = 2x40 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
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 matchday 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 <u>Exceptions in accordance with the MLS NEXT Concussion Protocol</u>
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



Discipline

Category	Standard
Red Cards	<p>Red Card accumulation will follow a player and staff member across all age groups and must be served in the player/staff member's primary age group.</p> <p>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</p>
Yellow Cards	<p>Yellow Card accumulation will follow a player and staff member across all age groups and must be served in the player/staff member's primary age group. 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.</p> <p>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</p>
Discipline within Fixture	<p>If a player receives a Yellow Card in two different matches within the same fixture, both cards will count towards their Yellow Card accumulation.</p> <p>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.</p>
Fixture	<p>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.</p>



Facilities & Training

Category	Standard
Field Standards for Matches	<p>Expectations for MLS NEXT clubs to provide appropriate, high-quality fields to host MLS NEXT matches</p> <p>Minimum Field Sizes: U13 = Minimum of 65x84 U14 = Minimum of 65x100 U15 & Older = Minimum of 70x110</p> <p>Any fields outside of these standards, must be approved by MLS NEXT staff before the season starts</p>
Match Locations	<p>Clubs can use multiple locations for MLS NEXT Regular Season matches, subject to MLS NEXT approval</p> <p>MLS NEXT encourages neutral sites to prevent overnight stays when applicable</p>
Training	<p>U13 must train a minimum of 3 times per week U14 & up must train a minimum of 4 times per week</p>
Rest Day	<p>Individual players must be given at least one day off per week</p>



MLS Academy U18 Teams

Category	Standard
Competition Format	<p>U18 MLS Academy Teams will be listed as U19 Teams within Kitman Labs</p> <p><u>MLS NEXT Regular Season Flex matches</u> U18 MLS Academy Teams will compete in the U19 Age group against U19 Non-MLS Academy Teams</p> <p><u>MLS NEXT Regular Season Pro Player Pathway matches</u> U18 MLS Academy Teams will compete against other U18 MLS Academy Teams</p> <p><u>MLS NEXT Events</u> U18 MLS Academy Teams will compete in the U19 Age group in all events, unless otherwise noted</p>
Overage Player Rule	<p>Each U18 MLS Academy Team can register up to 3 total Overage Players, including Late Developers (Ex. If a U18 Team has two Late Developers, the team can only add one additional Overage Player to the roster).</p> <p>Overage Players will be considered U19/U20 age group players (2006/2005 birthyears).</p> <p>The 3 Overage Players will not count towards roster maximums and are interchangeable throughout the MLS NEXT season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roster total: Average of 24 players +3 Overage players• Primary Adds: The 3 Overage players can be replaced throughout the season without limit (Ex. there can be a different set of 3 Overage Players for every match throughout the season).



MLS NEXT Events

Category	Standard
MLS NEXT Fest	20 Players per roster 3 Guest Players per roster 3 Late Developers per roster
Generation adidas Cup	20 Players per roster 3 Guest Players per roster No Late Developers permitted No Overage Players permitted
MLS NEXT Flex	20 Players per roster No Guest Players permitted 3 Late Developers per roster
MLS NEXT Cup Playoffs	20 Players per roster No Guest Players permitted 3 Late Developers per roster
MLS NEXT Cup Showcase	20 Players per roster 3 Guest Players per roster 3 Late Developers per roster