

**Southern Districts Summer Football
Competition Rules 2026**



**2026
SUMMER SOCCER
COMPETITION
RULES**

NEW RULES AND REGULATIONS

13.2 Teams will play 12 rounds over 12 weeks. Competitions with byes will be avoided where possible.

19.4 When the goalkeeper takes possession of the ball while it is still in play with their hands, including after a save, play must be restarted with a throw. The goalkeeper is not permitted to kick the ball directly from their hands, and drop-kicks are not allowed. The ball must be touched by another player before the goalkeeper can kick it again. If the goalkeeper kicks or drop-kicks the ball after making a save, a corner kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

Additionally, the goalkeeper's throw must not travel over the halfway line without first touching the ground or another player. If the ball crosses the halfway line on the full from the goalkeeper's throw, a free kick will be given to the opposing team at the halfway line, at the point closest to where the ball crossed.

*****Grade 7 Teams will remain the same format as Winter Competition with 4v4 (maximum of 7 players registered per team)**

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ABBREVIATIONS:

SDSFA	Southern Districts Soccer Football Association
MC	Management Committee
FIFA	International Football Association
RFTS Form	Registration Form / Team Sheet.

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1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SDSFA COMPETITION DEPARTMENT

- 1.1** Compiling of all Association run competitions, and the administration of those competitions in accordance with the Association rules.
- 1.2** Official interpretation of the Competition Rules in consultation with SDSFA MC.
- 1.3** Recording match results and maintaining the competition point score.
- 1.4** An area at the host complex will be designated as 'Summer Soccer Central', which will act as the administration and information centre for the matches during the tournament. 'Summer Soccer Central' will be clearly identified on all venue maps and appropriately signed.

2. AGE GROUPS

- 2.1** To be eligible to play in an age limited competition in any year the player must attain that age in the current calendar year i.e. January 1 to December 31.

3. POINTS

- 3.1** The competition points shall be allocated as follows:
 - A** Win 3 points
 - B** Draw 1 point
 - C** Win on forfeit 3 points
- 3.2** Any team awarded a forfeit shall be awarded 3 points and 2–0 result in the relevant competition, the opposition team shall be similarly debited.

4. MATCH FORFEITS

- 4.1** A team may forfeit a match by providing written notification to the SDSFA Competition Department (info@sdsfa.com) no less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled match time. A forfeiting FINE of \$25.00 may APPLY.
- 4.2** Where a team refuses, by word or action to take part in all or part of a match, that team shall be deemed to have forfeited the match. THE FORFEITING TEAM MAY INCUR A FINE OF \$50.00.
- 4.3** A copy for all Team Registration Form / Team Sheet (RFTS Form) will be held by the Tournament Director at the Summer Soccer Central, Where a team has insufficient players (less than five(5) for 7 to AA, less than three(3) for G6) prior to the scheduled Match time, that team shall be deemed to have forfeited the match without notice. THE FORFEITING TEAM MAY INCUR A \$50.00 FINE.
- 4.4** A team claiming a forfeit must submit a RFTS Form to the Tournament Director containing at least five(5) players who are present and eligible to play in the match and where an official or accredited Referee is present, he shall sign the RFTS Form in accordance with these rules. The Coach or Manager of the team forfeiting a match shall have the right to inspect the I.D. sheet of the opposition team and ensure that only the players present are named on the RFTS Form.
- 4.5** Any team that forfeits two (2) games without notice at any time during the competition may be eliminated from the competition.

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- 4.6** Any team receiving any FINES must insure that all fines are paid before the start of their next competition match to the Tournament Director at Summer Soccer Central, failure to do so may eliminate them from further competition.

5. REGISTRATIONS

- 5.1** All registrations must be in accordance with SDSFA By-laws and completed on Play Football. Failure to put up a Passport style ID photo will result in the players registration not being approved and them being unable to play until they do so.
- 5.2** The minimum age for any player to be registered is five (5) years old.
- 5.3** No player is permitted to play in an age group more than two (2) years above their current age. The only exception is female playing in female only age groups where they can play three (3) years above their current age.
- 5.4** Players may only register with one team. SDSFA Winter players will only be permitted a maximum of three transfers from other Member Clubs.
- 5.5** Persons not registered with SDSFA for the 2025 Winter Season may nominate
- A)** Through a SDSFA Member Club, or
 - B)** Form their own team, however all fees are to be paid prior to the commencement of the competitions.
 - C)** All Teams must complete a online Team Nomination Form.
- Team Nominations in “B” above must have a nominated person responsible for all matters relating to the team.
- The person responsible for the team is to ensure all players of the team have registered on Play Football and uploaded appropriate photos.
- 5.6** All teams must have a Coach (and/or Manager) Registered with the SDSFA. Only 2 officials permitted on benches during games and must carry a current ID registration card.
- 5.7** All Coaches and Managers Must have a current Working with Childrens Number
- 5.8** The Competition Department reserves the right to confirm the status of all players, Coaches and Managers and to refuse participation in the competition if deemed necessary.

6. PAYMENT OF FEES

- 6.1** Player Registration Fees should be paid at time of registration and must be paid prior to the commencement of the first match. I.e. No player will take the field if Registration Fees are not paid.
- 6.2** All fees are paid prior to the commencement of the competitions and Referees Fees and Match Game Fees will be paid by SDSFA.

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7. I.D. CARDS

- 7.1** All games will be played under Electronic team sheet /I.D sheet system. No ID verification, No Play Rule.
- 7.2** Opposing Team Managers (or Coaches) are responsible for the signing in the team and verifying opposing players are registered on team sheet.

8. REFEREES

- 8.1** A Referee shall be appointed from the SDSRI for each match where possible.
- 8.2** Where an official Referee is not present five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off, the Tournament Director or Host Club shall appoint a Referee. The away team will have first choice.
- 8.3** A Referee appointed from the SDSRI to act as a Referee at a match shall be entitled to a fee for each Match in accordance with the table of fees.
- 8.4** Upon the conclusion of the match the Referee shall complete such detail on the Match Day / Team Sheet as is within his jurisdiction and shall sign the Match Day / Team Sheet in the appropriate place. He/She shall obtain the signatures of the Manager (or Coach) of both teams and return the Match Day / Team Sheet to Tournament Director at Summer Soccer Central.

9. MATCH BALLS

- 9.1** In the competition one match ball will be supplied by each team at every match.
- 9.2** Footballs shall be of an approved material and shall be of the following minimum circumference.

AGE GROUPS	CIRCUMFERENCE	SIZE
	Minimum / Maximum	
All Grades to age 9.	53cm (21 in) / 58cm (23in)	3
Grades 10 to age 13		4
Grade 14+		5

10. MATCH DURATION

- 10.1** Unless otherwise specified in the rules each match shall consist of two equal halves of fifteen (15) minutes for ages 6 to 14. For ages above twenty (20) minutes per half.
- 10.2** There shall be a 2min break and Changeover at halftime.
- 10.3** The allowance of extra time for Senior Matches to offset that, which is lost due to injury, or any other reasonable cause, shall be at the discretion of the Referee.
- 10.4** There will be no added time for injuries or substitutions other than in above 10.3.

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11. ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPETITIONS

- 11.1** No player is allowed to play in any other team other than the team he is registered for on the registration team sheet.
- 11.2.1** A player shall be deemed to have played for a team in a match if his/her name appears on that teams Electronic Team Sheet.
- 11.2.2** A new player before taking part in a competition match must be listed on the Electronic Team Sheet and only if there is provision and the number of players in that Team is permissible and logged with SDSFA and the Tournament Director, failure to adhere to any of the above will deem the player ineligible.

12. REPLACEMENT AND INTERCHANGE PLAYERS

- 12.1** A maximum of three (3) players (four (4) for all age and above) may be used from the bench as interchange players for all teams provided players who are to be used as replacements have been listed on the Electronic Team Sheet prior to the commencement of the game.
- 12.2** The “Interchange Zone” will be an area, one metre either side of the halfway line.
- 12.3** The number of interchanges made during a match is unlimited. A player who has been replaced may return to the field for another player.
- 12.4** If during an interchange, an interchange player enters the field before the replaced player leaves the field, then the Referee shall caution the interchange player and than restart the game.
- 12.5** If during an interchange, an interchange player enters the field or a replaced player leaves the field, from a place other than the interchange, the Referee shall caution both players and then restart the game.

13. COMPETITION FORMAT

- 13.1** The Competition Department will create a draw depending on the amount of team in that age group.
- 13.2** Teams will play 12 rounds over 12 weeks. Competitions with byes will be avoided where possible.
- 13.3** Once the draw is set, there will be no changes made.
- 13.4** There will be no games replayed due to washouts or any other outside influences except at the discretion of the Competition Department in consultation with the SDSFA Board. If no game is played, then that game will be considered a Draw and 1 point will be awarded to all teams affected.
- 13.5** All competition winners will be determined by points at the conclusion of the final round; this will give all teams a full complement of games.

14. SEND-OFFS (Red Cards)

- 14.1** A player who is sent from the field of play shall be subject to the provision of the rules of the SDSFA Inc & P D & J.C and will be notified by the Competition Department of either a statutory sentence, or requirement to face a disciplinary hearing.

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- 14.2** A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes. A named substitute, who has been sent off, either before the kick-off or after play has started, may not be replaced. A substitute may replace a sent-off player and enter the field after two minutes of playing time have elapsed since the sending-off, provided that he has the authorization of the referee.

15. COLOUR CLASH

- 15.1** When two teams with similar colored registered uniforms are drawn to play, the “home team” shown on the draw (First Listed Team) shall change.

16. TEAM SHEETS (Electronic Team Sheet)

- 16.1** The first team shown on the draw will be considered the “home team”.
- 16.2** An Electronic Team Sheet, completed by both teams, must be lodged with the Tournament Director at Summer Soccer Central no less than fifteen (15) minutes prior the scheduled match time.
- 16.3** The referee reports final results to Summer Soccer Central at the end of his/her refereeing shift.

17. SUMMER OF SOCCER ALL GRADES

- 17.1** All teams so entered shall comply with all rules of the SDSFA and the modifications listed below:
- 17.2** The field of play for age groups 7 and up shall be a minimum of fifty metres (50m) and a maximum of sixty-five metres (65m) in length and it's width shall not be less than thirty five metres (35m) nor more than forty-five metres (45m). The centre of the field shall be marked up by a dot (or cross). A centre circle of five metres (5m) may be marked, as may a halfway line. A semicircle of radius six metres (6m) from the centre point of the goal, appropriately marked, will delineate the goal area. Goals will be 1.3m high and 3m wide.
- For grade 6 and 7, pop up goals are to be used. The field of play shall be a minimum of 30 metres(30m) and a maximum of forty metres (40m) in length and its width shall not be less than 25metres(25m) nor more than 35metres (35m). The centre of the field shall be marked up by a dot (or cross). A centre circle of three metres (3m) may be marked, as may a halfway line.
- 17.3** All teams (excluding Grade 6 and 7) will be allowed a maximum of ten (10) players, all of whom must be registered in accordance with the Competition and SDSFA rules. Not more than seven (7), including the goalkeeper may take the field at one time, (Six (6) for ages 17+) and a minimum of five (5) (Four (4) for ages 17+) one of whom shall be the goalkeeper must be on the field at all times. Substitutes can be used on the interchange rule, anytime the ball is out of play and with the permission of the Referee. Grade 6 and 7 teams will have seven (7) players registered with not more than four (4) to take the field at any given time.
- 17.4** All players must be ready near the field five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled match time.
- 17.5** Goal kicks may be taken from anywhere within the goal area. The ball cannot be kicked over the halfway line on the full. The ball must make contact with the ground or a player before crossing the halfway line.
- 17.6** Corner kicks shall be taken from within one metre (1 m) of the corner.

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- 17.7** All free kicks are indirect (except for a denying a goal scoring opportunity). The free kick is to be taken where the offence happened. If the offence happens inside the goal area the free kick is placed on the edge of the goal area.
- 17.8** In the case of the denial of a goal scoring opportunity (DOGSO), where a player deliberately denies the opponent an obvious opportunity to score a goal a direct free kick from the location of the offence will be awarded. If the offence is inside the penalty area, the ball is to be placed on the edge of the penalty area.
- 17.9** At free kicks, goal kicks, pass ins and at the kick-off, the opposition players must remain five metres (5m) from the ball until it is kicked.
- 17.10** All players must be in their own half of the field at each kick-off. The ball is deemed to be in play as it clearly moves (in any direction).
- 17.11** Each Coach or (Manager) shall remain within the bench area, coaching his team in a non-hysterical orderly manner.
- 17.12** Abuse of and attacks on Referees will not be tolerated. Any team whose officials or spectators are found guilty **WILL BE SUSPENDED** from any further competition in any age group. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- 17.13** All Coaches / Managers will be required to have an approved ID on at all times. If you don't have an ID you're not allowed on the bench. Only 2 members (Coach and Manager) are permitted on the bench during games.
- 17.14** Shin Pads must be worn by all players. Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any jewellery) Wedding band rings are allowed but must be fully taped.
- 17.15** The competition is expected to be held from week commencing on or around 21st September and must be completely finished not later than the 11th December 2026.
- 17.16** There shall be no offside.
- 17.17** There shall be no slide tackles.
- 17.18** There shall be **no** borrowing of players from other teams and only registered players can play.

18. SUMMER OF SOCCER 'JUST FOR FUN' GRADES 6 to 11

These age groups will play under the SDSFA normal non competitive rules as laid down in the winter competition. REMEMBER THESE AGE GROUPS ARE NON-COMPETITIVE.

- 18.1** All free kicks within the goal area (for both the attacking and defending sides) will be taken from a point on the arc delineating the goal area nearest the point where the offence occurred.
- 18.2** No goal keeper required for Grade 6 and 7 where Pop up goals are used.

19. SUMMER OF SOCCER GRADES 8 TO AA

- 19.1** No goals are to be scored from within the goal area. If the attacking player touches the ball within the goal area & the ball enters the goal directly or via deflection from any player, a goal kick is awarded. If the attacking player touches the ball within the goal area & deflects off any player & the ball goes out over the goal line, a goal kick is awarded
- 19.2** No back passes. A goal keeper cannot pick up the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately passed to him from a team mate

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19.3 Goalkeepers may act as a 7th field player (in ages 8-16) and 6th player (ages 17+) but are not permitted outside of their own defensive half of the field. Free kick to the opposing team at the halfway line where the goal keeper has crossed the halfway line.

19.4 When the goalkeeper takes possession of the ball while it is still in play with their hands, including after a save, play must be restarted with a throw. The goalkeeper is not permitted to kick the ball directly from their hands, and drop-kicks are not allowed. The ball must be touched by another player before the goalkeeper can kick it again. If the goalkeeper kicks or drop-kicks the ball after making a save, a corner kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

Additionally, the goalkeeper's throw must not travel over the halfway line without first touching the ground or another player. If the ball crosses the halfway line on the full from the goalkeeper's throw, a free kick will be given to the opposing team at the halfway line, at the point closest to where the ball crossed.

19.5 There are no throw ins. The throw inns are replaced with a pass in. The ball must be placed on the touch line where the ball left the field of play. The ball must be stationary on the ground. The ball must be played by the feet. When the ball clearly moves it is active again. A goal cannot be scored directly from a Pass in. All opponents must be 5m from the pass in.