THANKSGIVING INTER-SCHOOL SHIELD

OFFICIAL 2026 TOURNAMENT RULES | | Girls: Nov. 25 • Boys: Nov. 27

1 | Format & game play

• **4v4, no goalkeeper.** Four field players per team; no use of hands. Maximum six players per roster.

• Games are 16 minutes with a running clock and a four-minute scheduled crossover. Two fields operate simultaneously.

• No offside. Out-of-bounds restarts are kick-ins. Substitutions are on the fly, after the departing player exits the field.

• If the ball strikes the ceiling or lights, the opposing team receives an indirect kick at midfield.

• **UPDATED — Scoring:** Goals may be scored from anywhere on the playing field. There is no midfield scoring restriction.

• No half-circle restriction. Sliding to tackle or save the ball is prohibited and results in an indirect free kick.

• Defenders must remain at least two yards from dead-ball restarts. If the defensive goal area is closer than five yards, the ball is placed five yards away. All dead-ball kicks are indirect; no penalty kicks.

• **UPDATED — Goal kicks:** Goal kicks may be taken from anywhere in the end line and may cross midfield in the air or on the ground. There is no midfield restriction.

• Metal cleats and jewelry are prohibited; shin guards are required.

2 | Player eligibility & rosters

· U10: born August 1, 2016 or later. U12: born August 1, 2014 or later. Junior High: current 7th or 8th graders or younger. High School: current high school seniors or younger. Birthdate cutoffs are retained from the previous draft for final verification.

• Players may play up into older divisions, but not down. Each player may roster and play for only one team within a given division; eligible players may play in more than one division.

• Teams must consist of players representing the same school district. Private-school students may represent their private school or the public-school district of residence.

• All players must be registered and have completed required waivers. Coaches must sign the official six-player roster certifying age and school eligibility. No switching teams within a division after tournament play begins.

3 | Conduct & discipline

• A yellow card requires the player to leave the field and sit for five minutes. Two yellow cards in one game equal a red card; that player cannot return to that game.

• A red card requires immediate removal of the player or coach; the team plays one player down, and the offender sits out the next game. Serious or dangerous play may result in a red card.

• Referees control the game. The tournament director resolves administrative disputes and eligibility challenges.

4 | Pool play & standings

• Eight teams per division in two pools of four. Each team plays three pool games; the first-place team from each pool advances to the division final.

• Pool standings: win = 3 points; tie = 1 point; loss = 0 points.

• Pool first-place tiebreakers in order: (1) head-to-head; (2) fewest goals against; (3) goal differential; (4) sudden-death playoff if first place remains unresolved.

• If three teams remain tied for first after those criteria, a witnessed random draw assigns one team a bye; the other two play a tiebreaker, then the winner plays the bye team.

5 | Sudden-death overtime

• Applies to unresolved first-place pool tiebreakers and division championship games. First goal wins.

• Play 4v4 for three minutes; if still tied, 3v3 for three minutes; then 2v2 for three minutes; then 1v1 until a goal is scored (no time limit). Remove one player per team at each stage.

• Ordinary pool games may end tied. Tiebreakers or championship overtime may delay later start times.

6 | Overall School Cup scoring & awards

• School Cup points by division finish: **Champion 10; runner-up 5; second in pool 3; third in pool 2; fourth in pool 1.** Each team receives only its final placement score.

• **UPDATED — Two scoring teams:** A district may enter multiple teams in a division, but only its **two highest-finishing teams**, determined by final tournament placement, earn School Cup points. All teams may compete for the division championship.

• Overall Cup ties: most division championships; then most division runner-up finishes; if still tied, co-champions.

• Prizes for first-place teams in each division. One large Cup Trophy awarded each year to the winning school district.

7 | Tournament information

• Entry fee: $180 per team. Venue: The Pitches at Indipark, 571 Industrial Park Rd, Milton, PA 17847.

• Registration/contact: Randy Wolfe • 570-713-4902 • randywolfe83@yahoo.com.