

# TEXAS ACADEMY LEAGUE

## OPEN CUP 2026 COLLEGE SHOWCASE

### RULES OF THE COMPETITION

**Overview of Format of play:** The Texas Academy League (TAL) Open Cup will be played similarly to the MLS GA Cup.

- The U13-U19 teams will each play three games of 20-minute halves on Friday and Saturday.
- On Sunday, the top 4 qualifiers from each age group will play a semi-final with 35-minute halves, and the winners of those games will play a final with 35-minute halves.
- On Sunday, the teams who do not qualify for the semifinal round on Sunday will play one consolation game on Sunday morning with 35-minute halves.

This format allows for multiple high-performance games with teams competing for the TAL Open Cup.

The Youth Academy Teams at U11 and U12 will play a traditional event with three games and a Final on Sunday. Those games are all 25-minute Halves.

1. Team rosters are limited to a **maximum of twenty-two (22)** players in 13U, 14U, 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U age groups. Team rosters are limited to a **maximum of eighteen (18)** players in the 11U & 12U age group. All players may be suited for match.
2. All teams shall be allowed to have up to a combined total of **five (5) Guest Players** but are allowed **unlimited Club Pass** Players, with a maximum roster of **twenty-two (22)** for 13U, 14U, 15U, 16U, 17U, 18U and 19U age groups, and with a maximum roster of **eighteen (18)** for the 11U & 12U age group, as defined in #1. All Guest Players/Club Pass Players must meet the following criteria: 1) must be approved for participation by their respective governing body 2) must be a registered player with the appropriate governing body.
3. Players may not play for more than one team in the tournament within the same age group without director approval.
4. All players on a team should have a unique jersey number. Online event rosters should

be updated to reflect player name and jersey #.

5. Team Manager or Coach must carry a copy of the team's official roster and must have the player passes available for review as requested. All online checkin docs must be uploaded in advance of the team's first game. Rosters are frozen at the start of your first match in the event.
6. The first team listed is considered the home team. Home team wears light. **Any color conflicts will be resolved by the visiting/away team.** Both teams will be on the same side of the field, spectators will be on the opposite side across from the team bench unless instructed otherwise.
7. Match duration: 11U & 12U, two 25-minute halves, 5 min halftime; Friday & Sat for U13 -U19 will consist of 3 mini games with 20 min halves, 5 min halftime. Sunday Semifinals and Finals will be 35 min halves, 5 min halftime.
8. 1<sup>st</sup> place team trophy cup will be awarded for each division in this showcase event.
9. Unlimited free substitution will be allowed during natural stoppage of the match at the referee's discretion.
10. Players or Coaches sent off during a match are not allowed to play/coach in the next match. In case of continued bad conduct of players, teams, officials, or supporters, the team may be withdrawn from the competition and reported to their association. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team and supporters.
11. Judgment calls by referees may not be appealed by tournament staff or the tournament director. No appeal to change game results will be accepted. Video evidence will not be considered.
12. The decision of the Tournament Director, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, on any matter is final and may not be appealed.
13. Noise maker devices are prohibited during games.
14. If inclement weather cancels the tournament prior to the completion of a team's first scheduled game of the tournament, a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the team's entry fee may be retained by the tournament to cover start-up cost of the tournament.
15. No refund will be issued after a team is accepted.
16. All teams are expected to pick up trash in their area following their game.
17. All teams are expected to show good sportsmanship throughout the tournament.

**DETERMINING WINNERS:** Teams will be awarded points on the following basis:

Three (3) Points per Win

One (1) Points per Tie

Zero (0) Point per Loss

In the event of a tie in points at the end of the bracket play, the winner for the advancement to Semi-Final or Final will be determined as follows:

1. The winner in head to head competitions
2. Goal Differential (limit of 8 per game)
3. Goals For (limit of 8 per game)
4. Goal Against (limit of 8 per game)
5. Most Wins
6. Most Shutouts
7. If a tie still exists after steps 1 through 6, a coin toss will be used to decide advancing team.

In the event of a **three-way tie at the end of bracket play**, the winner for advancement to the Final will be determined as above without consideration for comparison of head to head competition to eliminate one team. If the teams are still tied and FIFA Kicks have to be taken there will be a draw by the Tournament Committee. The first team drawn will receive the bye; the next team drawn will be the home team against the remaining team in the first contest of penalty kicks. The winner of the first contest will then compete against the bye team in penalty kicks to determine the group winner. The bye team will be the home team.