



**European  
School  
Games**

**2026**



**FOOTBALL**

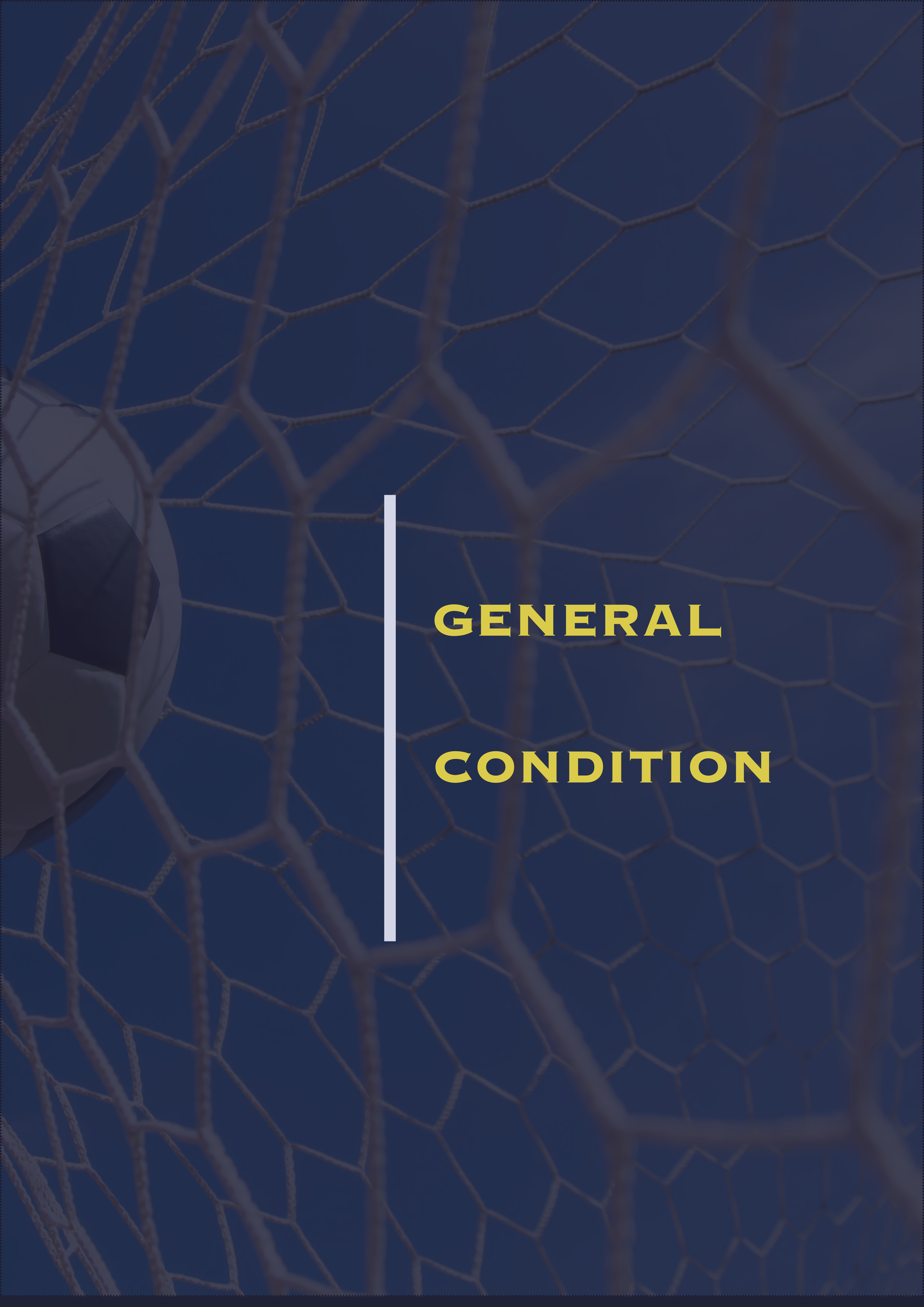
**RULES AND REGULATIONS**



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**GENERAL  
CONDITION**



# GENERAL OVERVIEW



This document ensures that all competition-related aspects are managed fairly and mannered. The key objectives of these regulations are:

- Defining the general conditions for participation in ESG Football events.
- Outlining the sports program details.
- Specifying the technical rules.
- Establishing delegation composition guidelines.
- Setting the procedures for draws.
- Defining the process for protests and appeals.

Any exception to these rules can be made by the Event Technical Football Committee (ETFC)

## 1. GENERAL CONDITION

The competition will be conducted in accordance with FIFA technical regulations and overseen by the Event Technical Football Committee (ETFC). Any variations from FIFA regulations will be outlined in the event bulletin. The competition will follow the FIFA Youth Football Regulations, ensuring compliance with age-specific rules and guidelines. The FIFA Laws of the Game will also apply where relevant.

Decisions regarding issues not covered in this document will be determined by the ETFC.

## COMPETITION CATEGORIES

U18: Boys and Girls Categories

U15: Boys and Girls Categories\*

## AGE ELIGIBILITY:

U18: Players born in 2008–2009–2010

U15: Players born in 2011–2012–2013\*

\*Younger players may be accepted upon approval by the ETFC





**SPORT**

**PROGRAM &**

**RULES**



## 2. SPORT PROGRAM

Events: Boys and Girls Team Competitions

## 3. SPORT RULES

The competition will adhere to FIFA rules and ensure all teams compete until final rankings are determined.

### COMPETITION STRUCTURE

The tournament consists of two phases:

#### Phase 1: Round-Robin Stage

- All teams will participate in a round-robin format, where each team plays against every other team once.
- After all matches are completed, teams will be ranked based on their performance (points, goal difference, or other tiebreakers).
- The rankings from this phase will determine the placement of teams into divisions for the knockout phase.

#### Phase 2: Knockout Stage (Divisional Playoffs)

- Based on their round-robin rankings, teams will be divided into divisions.
- The number of teams per division will depend on the total number of participating teams
- Each division will follow a knockout format, where teams compete in elimination matches.

Note:

- If the total number of participating teams is too low to apply this system effectively, the Organizing Committee will decide on an alternative tournament format to ensure fair and competitive play.



# 3. SPORT RULES



## Divisional Breakdown & Knockout Format

After the round-robin phase, teams will be divided as follows:

### Champion Division (Top-tier teams)

- The highest-ranked teams from the round-robin phase will compete for the overall championship.
- The top three teams in this division will receive gold, silver, and bronze medals.

### Division 2 (Mid-tier teams) (Gold Star division)

- The next set of ranked teams will compete for Division 2 honors.
- The top three teams in this division will receive gold, silver, and bronze medals.

### Division 3,4 etc

- If the number of teams allows, more divisions will be created to ensure fair competition.
- Each division will award gold, silver, and bronze medals to its top three teams.

## Medal Distribution

- Each division awards gold, silver, and bronze medals to the top three finishing teams.
- This ensures recognition for performance across all competition levels, not just the top-ranked teams.

## Ranking & Adjustments

- The exact number of teams per division will depend on the total number of participating teams.
- Tournament organizers may adjust brackets if needed to ensure fair competition (e.g., adding placement matches if there is an uneven number of teams).

## Purpose of the System

This structure guarantees that:

- All teams get multiple matches through the round-robin phase.
- Each team remains engaged in the competition, regardless of early results.



# 3. SPORT RULES



## Purpose of the System

- Competitive balance is maintained, as teams face others at a similar level in the knockout phase.
- Medals are awarded across multiple levels, making the tournament more inclusive and rewarding.
- The playing system and final competition schedule will align with sports traditions.
- The format depends on the total number of registered teams and will be outlined post-registration. Possible competition formats include: (1) Group Stage with Knockout Rounds, or (2) Single Round-Robin, depending on the number of teams.
- The final format will be confirmed after registration.

## Match Duration

- **U18 Category:** 2 x 40 minutes, with a 15-minute halftime break.
- **U15 Category:** 2 x 35 minutes, with a 15-minute halftime break.

## Point System (Group Stage Matches):

- Win = 3 points
- Draw = 1 point
- Loss = 0 points

In the event of a tie after applying all listed criteria, the following order will be used before resorting to a random draw:

- Fewest goals conceded in group stage.
- Most wins in group stage.
- Fair play ranking.
- Random draw (if still tied):
  1. Points tally from all group stage matches.
  2. Head-to-head results between tied teams.
  3. Goal difference across all group matches.
  4. Highest number of goals scored (if goal difference is the same).



# 3. SPORT RULES



## Point System (Group Stage Matches):

5. Fair play ranking: Yellow cards (–1 point), Red cards (–3 points). If a player receives two yellow cards in the same match, this will be considered a total deduction of 3 points (–3), rather than –1 per card.

If still tied after all criteria have been applied, a random draw (lottery) will determine the advancing team.

## Penalty Shootout

If a knockout match ends in a draw after regulation time, the winner is determined by a penalty shootout, following FIFA rules.

## Suspensions & Disciplinary Actions

- Standard FIFA yellow and red card rules apply.
- Two yellow cards in the same match = automatic expulsion and suspension for the next game.
- Two yellow cards in different matches = suspension for the following match.
- Yellow card tally resets after the group stage, except when a second yellow is received in the last group match.
- A direct red card results in a minimum one-match suspension, with further disciplinary review by the ETFC.
- All participants, including players, coaches, and officials, must adhere to the FIFA Fair Play principles, maintaining respect for opponents, referees, and event staff.
- Any act of violent conduct, racism, or unsportsmanlike behavior will be subject to disciplinary action by the ETFC, including potential disqualification.



# 3. SPORT RULES



## Substitutions

- A maximum of 7 substitutions per game is allowed.
- In the U18 category, once a player is substituted out, they cannot re-enter the match (no rolling substitutions are allowed).
- However, in the U15 category, rolling substitutions will be permitted to encourage player development and ensure adequate playing time for all participants.
- A team may stop play for substitutions up to three times per match.
- Half-time substitutions do not count towards this limit.
- If both teams substitute at the same time, it counts as one stoppage.

## Other Rules

- Teams must arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled match time.
- Teams will be allowed a 10-minute warm-up on the field before kick-off.
- All teams must submit their final team sheet at least 30 minutes before the match to the designated official.
- A delay of more than 5 minutes results in a 0-3 forfeit loss.
- If a delay occurs due to unforeseen circumstances beyond a team's control (e.g., severe weather, injuries requiring medical evacuation), the ETFC will determine whether to reschedule or forfeit the match.
- Teams must bring two uniform sets (contrasting colors).
- Before each match, the referee will conduct an equipment inspection to ensure compliance with FIFA regulations, including proper footwear, shin guards, and team uniform consistency.
- Jersey numbers must range from 1 to 99 (number 0 is not allowed).
- Shin guards are mandatory. Shin guards must be appropriately sized according to the player's leg, as per FIFA equipment regulations.
- Match balls must meet FIFA Quality Program standards. The Organizing Committee will provide official match balls; however, teams must bring their own training and warm-up balls.



# 3. SPORT RULES



## Other Rules

- A maximum of six officials may sit on the team bench, but only one may stand in the technical area.
- During matches, only one official may stand in the technical area at any time.
- The Organizing Committee will ensure the presence of certified first aid personnel and an emergency medical response plan at all match venues.
- Teams are responsible for ensuring their players have adequate health insurance coverage.





**DELEGATION**

**COMPOSITION**



# 4. DELEGATION COMPOSITION



Each delegation must include:

- Head of Delegation (HOD) (Mandatory)
- Players (Mandatory)
- Team Officials (Mandatory)
- Field of Play Officials (Referees) (Optional)
- Additional Adults (Optional)

## Head of Delegation (HOD)

- Each delegation must appoint a single head, who serves as the main liaison between the delegation and the Organizing Committee (OC).

## Players

- All participants must be full-time students.
- Only accredited players from the official team list may compete.
- Each team must consist of a minimum of 16 players\*\*

*\*\*Any exceptions require OC approval.*

## Team Officials

### Coaches:

- Every team must have at least one coach.
- Teams cannot compete without a designated coach.

### Other Team Officials:

- Roles may include doctors, trainers, physiotherapists, statisticians, and team managers.
- Not mandatory but must be specified during registration.
- Any unregistered persons will not be considered part of the official team.



# 4. DELEGATION COMPOSITION



## Field of Play Officials (Referees)

- Each team may provide at least one referee. If insufficient referees are available, the Organizing Committee will appoint officials.
- Referees must hold either an international or national qualification.
- They may serve as referees and/or assistants.
- Referees must present certification during registration.

## Additional Adults

- Roles may include interpreters, security staff, media personnel etc.
- Additional adults are optional and must be specified during registration.
- Unregistered individuals will not receive accreditation.







**DRAW**

**PROCEDURES**



## 5. DRAW PROCEDURE



- The ETFC determines criteria and scheduling for the draw.
- The draw will be conducted fairly and transparently, with all registered teams randomly assigned to groups.
- If the total number of teams does not allow for equal group distribution, adjustments will be made to ensure a balanced competition format. If an odd number of teams are registered, the ETFC may create groups of different sizes while ensuring fairness in match distribution.
- The draw process will be overseen by the Event Technical Football Committee (ETFC) to guarantee neutrality.

## 6. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

- Once the draw is completed, the final group placements will be published and communicated to all teams.
- Any unforeseen issues related to the draw will be resolved by the ETFC before the competition begins.





**PROTESTS**

**AND APPEALS**



# 6. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

**Protests may only be filed for:**

- Administrative errors (e.g., incorrect application of rules).
- Rule misinterpretations.
- Player eligibility disputes.
- Referee decisions on in-game actions (e.g., fouls, penalties, offside) are final and cannot be protested.

**Only the HOD or team coach may submit a protest.**

**The protest must be:**

- submitted in written form in English, signed by the Head of Delegation or coach, and delivered to the ETFC representative
- Filed within 30 minutes after the match.
- Accompanied by a €100 fee, payable in cash to ETFC.

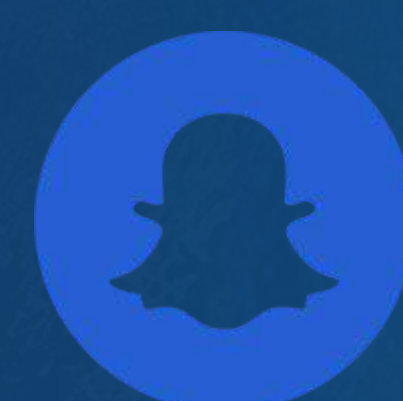
The appeal fee will only be refunded if the protest is upheld. If the protest is rejected, the fee will be retained by the Organizing Committee and not subject to further appeal.







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AUGUST  
2025