

Recreational Soccer and High School Soccer Eligibility For the Fall 2022 Recreational Season

Background

CalNorth (CYSA-N) is the governing body of most recreational club soccer within the Sacramento area. CalNorth divides the State into Districts. Clubs in the Sacramento area play in CYSA-N District VI.

California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) is the governing body for high school sports in California. CIF divides the State into 10 Sections. High Schools in the Sacramento area play in the Sac-Joaquin Section (SJS).

CIF Bylaw 600 discourages athletes from playing both high school and club soccer during the player's Season of Sport (currently during the winter). If a player is found to be in violation of Bylaw 600, the player's eligibility for high school soccer would be threatened. Prior to the 2016-2017 season, soccer was played in the Fall (Boys) and Spring (Girls) so there was no conflict with Bylaw 600.

Beginning in 2016-17, SJS changed the high school soccer season to a winter schedule, resulting in an overlap with the end of the recreational club season. To minimize the overlap, and any threat to an athlete's high school eligibility, CalNorth District VI began the U16/U19 CPL season one or two weeks before Labor Day weekend. For the upcoming 2022-23 CPL season, District VI will begin two weeks before the Labor Day weekend (August 20th), and will end with play on October 29th.

Questions and Answers:

- Can I play in Fall season games and try out and practice with my high school team? Yes
- Can I play in make-up games after the end of the CPL Fall season and still retain my high school eligibility? Yes, but to be totally safe, only if you sit out all high school scrimmages played before your CPL makeup game is played (HS scrimmages may start on Friday, Nov 11th).
- Can I play in District VI Cup and scrimmage and/or participate in an inter-scholastic contest with my high school team? Yes, see below.
- *In 2022 Sacramento-area high schools may scrimmage starting on Nov 11th, and the first "inter-scholastic contest" may be scheduled as early as Nov 18th.*

The SJS Calendar Overlap in 2022

Sac-Joaquin Section HS Soccer Calendar		HS Practice Can Begin	Season Begins 1st Scrimmage	First Allowed HS Contest
		Oct 31	Nov 11	Nov 18
U16 and U19 Recreational Soccer Calendar	Oct 29	Nov 5	Nov 12	
	Final U16 & U19 Games	Club play allowed	See Rule 600	See Rule 600

The Rules

CIF and SJS rules are available online. Section rules may be more strict than State rules. Also available is a SJS calendar that sets the 2022-23 dates of when the high schools may begin their scrimmages and contests. Links to these CIF-SJS documents are listed below.

https://www.cifsjs.org/about_cif-sjs/constitutions_and_bylaws

https://www.cifsjs.org/coaches_and_administrators/2223_sportcalendar_Final.pdf

The relevant rules are listed on the following page. Significant phrases have been underlined.

Recreational Soccer and High School Soccer Eligibility (cont'd)

CIF and SJS Bylaw 600 (in Article 6)

A student on a high school team becomes ineligible if the student competes in a contest on an "outside" team, in the same sport, during the student's high school season of sport (See Bylaw 504.A).

CIF and SJS Bylaw 504.A (in Article 5)

The season of sport for a school is that period of time which elapses between the first interscholastic contest and the final contest for that particular sport. The season of a sport for any individual student is that period of time which elapses between the student's first participation in an interscholastic contest and the student's final participation in a contest for that particular sport in that season.

Central Section Rule 4.1: *The season of sport is defined as that period which starts with the first inter-school contest (scrimmage, practice game, league game, or tournament), and ends with the last regularly scheduled game (except play-offs).*

Interpretation

Regardless of when the high school team begins scrimmaging or playing games, Bylaw 504.A permits an individual athlete to delay his or her season of sport, and thus preserve their high school eligibility by sitting out one or more high school contests.

CIF and SJS do not define the critical term "contest". In particular, there is a question as to whether a scrimmage is a contest. The calendar notes dates for scrimmages and contests separately, as if they were different. In the Central Section, Rule 4.1 makes it clear that a scrimmage is a type of contest.

The conservative assumption that SJS would also define a scrimmage as a contest, however, most high schools in SJS consider a "contest" to only be a match for which Referees are provided.

Penalties

The team and individual penalties for violating Bylaw 600 are defined in Bylaw 601.

Dead Periods

The 2022-2023 calendar refers HS season "Dead Periods". Dead Periods are defined in Section 504.8:

504.8 DEAD PERIODS During a Sac-Joaquin Section dead period (preseason and end of season), no member of the coaching staff (paid or volunteer) may have any contact with his/her athletes and use the sports equipment for their given sport. Weight training and conditioning are the only activities that will be allowed during these time periods. Coaches may be present during weight training and conditioning.