



**INTERNATIONAL SOCCER TOURNAMENT
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

Tournament Handbook

Updated Sept 2025

Introduction

The competition known as “The ISTNL Tournament”, otherwise called “The Tournament” is organized by the International Soccer Tournament Newfoundland and Labrador (ISTNL) Organization. The purpose of the Organization, in accordance with its objectives, is to promote the spirit of community, mental and physical wellness in NL by:

- Bringing people from different countries and cultures around a common passion – soccer.
- Giving talented residents and immigrants a platform to express their passion through communal sport.
- Strengthening connections and building relationships between diverse people through soccer sporting activities.
- Promoting the advancement of community dialogues and physical activities through soccer sporting activities, and
- Organizing other soccer- related activities including, but not limited to soccer competitions, physical workshops, football trainings, coaching education, talent scouting.

Governance Rules

This document states the Tournament Regulations which are applicable in all ISTNL competitions. The administration of the Tournament shall be carried out in accordance with these regulations and all participating teams shall adhere to the rules.

- This handbook shall be shared with all team Representatives on submitting an application to participate in the Tournament.
- All teams shall adhere to the rules of this handbook. Every team upon entry shall be deemed to have accepted the rules and to have agreed to abide by the decisions of the Tournament Committee.
- The Tournament and each team shall be committed to promoting inclusivity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.
- This Tournament and each team shall make every effort to promote equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognizing that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community, irrespective of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, color, religion or belief, ability or disability or otherwise.
- Teams shall comply with the provisions of any initiatives of The ISTNL which are adopted by the Tournament.
- Teams shall enter the Tournament by submitting an application form online which shall be received by the Tournament Committee. Any applications submitted after the registration deadline shall be allowed at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.
- The application form submitted by each team must include details of the team Representative and team information.
- Each team shall pay a registration fee to participate in the Tournament. This fee shall be payable after submitting the application form and shall be set annually by the Tournament Committee. The registration fee for this year is \$400.

The Tournament

This is an 11-a-side soccer competition under the management of a Tournament Committee, with each game between two teams and control of 3 officials – referee and assistant referees on the field of play.

- A game shall consist of two (2) forty-minute halves. Schedules of games may be altered and shall be decided by the Tournament Committee with each team informed prior to the game.
- Half-time for all games shall be 10-minutes. The half time may be shortened by the officiating referee on the field of play due to time constraints but must be at least 5-minutes in length.
- The Tournament comprises of 3 stages:
 - Pool Play - where each team play every other team (round-robin), with only four teams with highest points advancing to the next stage. Games in this stage can finish in a tie.
 - Semi Finals – where only four teams from the pool stage compete. There are no ties in this stage as every match must end with a winner.
 - Third Place and Final Games - where are no ties in the Third Place and Final games as every match must end with a winner. The games are played by teams in this format:
 - The two teams that lost at the Semi Final play against each other for Third Place.
 - The two teams that won at the Semi Final play against each other at the Final game.
- The winner from the Third Place match and all teams that participated in the Final game shall each be awarded with 3 medals for each of the twenty-two (22) players including two (2) team officials:
 - Gold medals for the winner of the Final game.
 - Silver medals for the loser of the Final game.
 - Bronze medals for the winner of the Third-Place game.
- The winner of the Final game shall be additionally awarded with an ISTNL branded Trophy.
- Where the ISTNL Trophy is awarded to the winners of the Tournament, the following agreement shall be signed by the Representative of the winning team on receiving the trophy; a copy shall be retained by the management committee and a copy retained by the winning team:

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- *"I, [name], the Team Representative of [team name], and representing the team, having been declared winners of the ISTNL Tournament, and the ISTNL Trophy having been delivered to us by the Competition, do hereby on behalf of the team jointly agree to return the trophy to the ISTNL Secretary on or before [date of expected return]. If the cup or trophy is lost or damaged whilst under our care we agree to refund to the Competition the amount of its current value."*

Point Standing/Advancement

The Tournament begins with the Pool Play stage where a team plays against every other team.

- The Tournament standing shall be based on the following points for the Pool Play:
 - Win - 3 points.
 - Tie - 1 point.
 - Loss - 0 points..
 - Forfeit – minus (-1) point.
 - Forfeit involving an illegal player – minus (-2) points.
- In the event of a two-way tie at the end of the Pool Play, teams with same points regarding advancement shall be handled thus:
 - Head-to-Head shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Goal Difference shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Cautions (yellow and red cards) shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Goal For and Goal Against shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, tossing shall determine the champion.
- In the event of a three-way tie at the end of the Pool Play, teams with same points regarding advancement shall be handled with:
 - Head-to-Head shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Goal Difference shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Cautions (yellow and red cards) shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, then Goal For and Goal Against shall determine the champion.
 - If the teams are still tied, tossing shall determine the champion.
- Matches shall be played by teams in this format in the Semi Finals thus:
 - Team with highest point vs lowest point from the Pool Play.
 - Team with next highest point vs next lowest point from Pool Play.
- Matches in the Final game shall be played by the winning teams from the Semi Final games.

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- In the event of a tie involving more than three teams, the Tournament Director shall determine the tie-breaking procedure based on the previous methods.
- In a draw in the Third Place, Semi Final and Final stages, there shall be two (2) ten-minute halves followed by penalty shoot-outs.

The Tournament Committee

The Tournament Committee shall comprise the Officers of the Tournament, headed by a Tournament Director as determined by the ISTNL Executive team.

- The Tournament Committee shall circulate the details of the Tournament to all competing teams in advance of the competition.
- The Tournament Committee shall provide schedules made available to the team Representatives.
- The Tournament Committee shall produce a safeguarding policy for the event; this shall list the designated persons responsible and policies to be followed; this shall be distributed to all competing teams in advance of the tournament.
- The Tournament Committee shall also complete a risk assessment of the event prior to the competition, assessing both Safeguarding, and Health and Safety, and shall make sure all mitigating factors identified in the assessment are actioned appropriately.
- The Tournament Committee shall work with the match officials at every game to maintain law and order before, during and after the games.
- The Tournament Committee shall act as a point of contact during games for inquiries related to the Tournament.
- The Tournament Committee team must be respected at all times during games.
- Decisions regarding player eligibility shall be made final by the Tournament Director, NOT the referee or other Tournament Coordinators.

The Teams

Each team shall be recognized as representing Nations and shall be committed to promoting diversity and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

- Each team shall be named after a global region (country, continent and so on) or a combination of these.
- Only one team shall be permitted from any distinct region to participate in the Tournament.
- Each team shall be allowed a maximum of twenty-two (22) players on its team roster.
- All competing teams must have paid the registration fee and other associated costs of entering the tournament in full prior to the first day of competition.
- The Home and Away teams shall be decided by the Tournament Committee before the start of the competition.
- Each team shall designate a Captain on the field that shall be responsible for representing the team, addressing the referee on matters of interpretation, and addressing the referee to obtain essential information.
- Every team shall register the color of its shirts with the competition on entry.

The Players

Every team must have a maximum of 11 players on the field of play at any game; one player must be the goalkeeper. A match may not start or continue if either team has fewer than seven (7) players.

- Players must be at least eighteen (18) years of age on the first day of January in the Tournament year. Decisions regarding player eligibility shall be made final by the Tournament Committee.
- A player who has not attained the age of eligibility shall not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play, in a match of any kind.
- Player(s) should be registered with the team they are representing and shall not represent another team throughout the tournament.
- A player's first priority of team involvement shall be the player's own specific country. If that country has a participating team and the team request the participation of the player, the player shall play for this country, else can play for whatever team so chooses.
- Illegal players are players not listed on the official roster of a team and or do not meet the age requirements.
- Illegal players include players that are involved in a conflict regarding participation where they are not cleared by their national team to play for another team.
- Illegal players also include players that have been suspended by Tournament Committee.
- A player shall compete on only one team throughout the Tournament.
- All players shall be insured for the duration of the Tournament.

The Referee

- Each match is controlled by a referee, appointed for each game by the Tournament Committee, who has full authority to enforce the soccer rules in connection with the match.
- Decisions shall be made to the best of the referee's ability according to soccer rules and the 'spirit of the game' and shall be based on the opinion of the referee who has the discretion to take appropriate action within these rules.
- The referee has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends.
- The referee has the power to take disciplinary action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner.
- The referee allows no unauthorized persons to enter the field of play.
- The referee controls the match in cooperation with the other match officials.
- Assistant referees shall be appointed for each game by the Tournament Committee.
- The Tournament Committee shall not appoint ineligible officials. If in doubt about the eligibility of the officials, team Representatives can contact the Tournament Committee for further information.
- Match officials shall be given a token for every game of the Tournament.
- The match officials shall not be held liable for any injury, loss, or damage suffered by any individual, team, officials or other body, which is due, or which may be due to any decision taken under the terms of the soccer rules or in respect of the normal procedures required to hold, play and control a match.
- The decisions of the referee, and all other match officials, must always be respected. The referee makes the final decision from the start of the match until the match ends, and the referee's decision must be upheld at all times.
- The referee for the Final match shall be awarded a memento.

Equipment

- The official soccer ball shall be a size 5 ball made of leather, synthetic leather or other suitable material.
- The compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items - shirt with sleeves, shorts, socks, shin guards and footwears.
- The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and the match officials.
- The team Captain must wear the armband which has a different color from the shirt color.
- Goalkeepers must wear colors which distinguish them from all other players and the match officials.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, two teams have the same colors, the team listed as first on the fixture shall be deemed the Home team and shall be the Home team's responsibility to alter their uniform as to not create confusion for the match officials and other players.
- Bibs are allowed to be worn by teams in situations where both teams in a match have similar colors.
- Boots must be worn by all participants on match day. Molded cleats or turf boots are recommended. Metal cleats are prohibited.
- Shin guards must be worn by all players and be made of rubber, plastic or similar material. Shin guards must be worn so they are covered entirely by socks to provide a reasonable degree of protection.
- Casts (plastic or other hard substance in its final form) shall not be worn during the game.
- Any exposed metal may be considered legal if covered by soft material and taped. Exposed jewelry such as wrist watches, bracelets, large or loop earring and neck chains shall not be worn during the game.
- Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry, but if worn, must be taped to the body.

Games Abandonment/Forfeiture

- Games abandoned prior to kick-off being completed shall be replayed in full where the Tournament schedule allows. In the case that the Tournament schedule does not allow a game to be replayed, the result shall be decided by penalty shots.
- Only the referee can make the final decision on a game for abandonment.
- The referee has the authority to abandon a game when he feels the situation is such that physical harm may come to themselves, players or spectators.
- Once kick-off has started:
 - Abandoned games after 40 minutes, the result and score line stands.
 - Games abandoned prior to 40 minutes being completed shall be restarted at the time of the abandonment until the completion of the full game duration has taken place.
 - In the case that the Tournament schedule does not allow a game to be finished or restarted after abandonment prior to 40 minutes, the result shall be decided by penalty shots.
- Forfeited games shall be declared by the referee in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:
 - If a team does not appear on the field, or while on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or within the time set for forfeitures. The grace period for all games is 10-minutes.
 - If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the officiating referee.
 - If, after play has been suspended by the referee, one side fails to resume playing within five (5) minutes after the referee has blown his whistle to resume play.
 - If, because of the removal of a player(s) from the game by the referee or for any cause, there are less than seven (7) players on either team, the game shall be forfeited in favor of the team with at least seven (7) players remaining.
 - If the order for the removal of a player by the referee is not obeyed within five (5) minutes.
 - If an ejected player refuses to leave the field, park and facility (including parking lot) as the case may be, within five (5) minutes.
 - If a team employs tactics designed to delay the game.

For further enquiry

please contact the International Soccer Tournament NL at contact@istnl.ca

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- The score of a forfeited game shall be 3 – 0 in favor of the team not at fault.
- Penalties on forfeited games in the Pool Play stage for the team at fault which is due to misbehaviors shall be assessed in the following manner:
 - A forfeited game shall tally a minus one (-1) point toward pool standings. Games played involving illegal players shall tally a minus two (-2) points toward pool standings.
 - In case of a double forfeit, the penalty is the same as it is with a single forfeit.
 - The team at fault shall be responsible to pay for the three (3) match officials' tokens in entirety.
- Extra time may occur due to the following circumstances based on the referee's judgment:
 - Time lost due to injuries to a player(s).
 - Excessive substitutions by a team made in an effort to delay the game.
 - Other cause(s) at the discretion of the officiating referee.
- Cautions leading to suspensions shall in all circumstances stand, as shall yellow cards received during an abandoned or forfeited match.
- Players who receive a yellow card prior to the match being abandoned or forfeited shall carry this caution when they re-enter the field of play during the replay.
- Both teams reserve the right to start the replayed match with a different starting line-up than that submitted for the abandoned match.
- In the event that a team has a player(s) sent off prior to match being abandoned or forfeited, they must start the replay with the same number of players as they had on the field when the game was ended.
- In the event that the referee abandoned the game due to both teams' misbehaviors in the Pool Play stage, both teams shall receive minus one (-1) point toward pool standings. If at the Semi-Final, both teams shall forfeit advancement to the Final stage, and if at the Final stage, the ISTNL trophy shall be awarded to the winner of the Third-Place match.
- There shall not be replay of any match where the referee abandons a match due to the misbehavior of both teams.
- In all cases of abandonment due to negative actions of teams/players, the Tournament Committee reserves the right to take further sanctions.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct is governed by the Tournament Committee and Match Officials. Procedures covering its use and implementation and any penalties necessary are the responsibility of the Tournament Committee and Match Officials. All related deliberations and sanctions shall be handled by the Disciplinary Committee made up of the Officials Representatives and representative(s) of the Tournament Committee.

- No player shall refuse to abide by a referee's decision.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall be guilty of heaping personal, verbal abuse upon any official for any real or imaginary wrong decision or judgment.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall be guilty of abusive verbal attack upon any player, referee or spectator or use profane, obscene or vulgar language in any manner at any time.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall discuss with a referee in any manner the decision reached by such referee except the Representative or team captain.
 - Penalty: The degree of infraction of this tenet of good sportsmanship shall, in the referee's judgment, draw a minimum penalty of a yellow card or a maximum penalty of removal from the game.
- No player shall at any time lay a hand upon, shove, strike, spit or threaten to strike any referee, player or spectator.

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- Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall be guilty of objectionable demonstrations by throwing equipment, debris or any other forceful action.
 - Penalty: The degree of infraction of this tenet of good sportsmanship shall, in the referee's judgment, draw a minimum penalty of a yellow card or a maximum penalty of removal from the game.
- No player shall be guilty of using unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body or person of any opposing player.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game.
- No player shall be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor, upon a player, referee or spectator.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall appear on the field of play or facility at any time in an intoxicated condition.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to immediately eject the player from the game and report such a player to the Tournament Committee. Such player shall be suspended until his/her case has been considered by the Disciplinary Committee.
- No player shall be guilty of gambling upon any play or the outcome of the game with any spectator, player or opponent.
 - Penalty: Referees are required to report violations of this rule to the Tournament Committee.
- Any player who receives two (2) cautions (yellow cards) during the Tournament shall automatically miss their team's next game.
- Any player who receives a direct red card during the tournament as a result of any of the offences herein shall automatically miss their team's remaining games of the Tournament and may face more sanctions depending on the gravity of the offence and the outcome of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee.
- All cautions (yellow cards) shall be cleared at the end of every of the three (3) stages, however, any outstanding suspensions shall carry over into the next stage of the competition.

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- The Disciplinary Committee members shall have no significant relationship with the affected party and shall be free from any other actual or perceived bias or conflict.
- The Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to levy further suspensions in cases of excessive misconduct, before and after the game.
- The Disciplinary Committee shall communicate any disciplinary action to teams, where possible by midnight on the day of the game, or as early as possible on the following day.

Protest Procedures

Every team is given the freedom to protest at any point of the game as long as such protest does not incite violence and completely follows the guidelines of the ISTNL handbook.

- The notification of the intent to protest must be made immediately after the play in question has been called.
 - The Representative or Captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the referee and a Tournament Director that the game is being continued under protest.
 - At the conclusion of a game a formal written protest must be filed with a Tournament Director who was present in the match.
 - All interested parties shall take notice of the conditions surrounding the making of a decision that shall aid in the correct determination of the issue.
- Protest that shall be received and considered are:
 - Misinterpretation of a playing rule.
 - Failure to apply or impose the correct penalty for a given violation.
 - Failure of the referee to apply the correct rule to a given situation and this shall be done only at the end of that match.
- Protests shall not be received or considered if they are:
 - Based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of the referee or any of the match officials.
 - If the notification of the intent to protest is made after the conclusion of the game.
 - If such protest does not follow the ISTNL guidelines.
- The formal written protest must be at the conclusion of the game in question and should contain the following information:
 - The date, time and place of game.
 - The team played against.
 - The names of the referee and Tournament Director during the game.

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- The rule and section of the ISTNL Handbook and/or soccer rules under which the protest is made.
- The conditions surrounding the making of a decision.
- All other essential facts involved in the matter protested.
- A decision made on a protested game may result in one of the following:
 - The protest is found invalid, and the game score stands as played.
 - When a protest is allowed, the game is replayed from the point at which the event occurred.
 - When a protest for ineligibility is allowed, the offended team shall be credited with a victory (forfeit score 3-0). In addition, the team with the ineligible player shall receive a minus (-2) points in pool standings.

Appeals

Every team/player(s) has the right to appeal over any disciplinary sanction issued or technical protest. The Appeals Committee shall be made up of an Officials Representative, who is not a match referee or representative in the Disciplinary Committee, and representatives(s) of the Tournament Committee who is not a representative in the Disciplinary Committee.

- All appeals shall be submitted to the Appeals Committee through any member of the Tournament Committee along with the appeal fee of \$20.
- Team/player(s) must communicate their wish to appeal within 1 hour of receiving the notification of disciplinary action.
- An appeal must be received by the Appeals Committee within 24 hours of the team receiving the notification of disciplinary action.
- Once received, where possible, appeals will be heard by 12:00 noon on the following day.
- The outcome will be communicated immediately after the decision has been made.
- The Appeals Committee members shall have no significant relationship with the affected party.
- The Appeals Committee members shall have had no involvement with the decision being appealed and shall be free from any other actual or perceived bias or conflict.
- Indisputable evidence is required for an official's decision to be overturned. Video footage shall be accepted to support an appeal and should be submitted to the Appeals Committee with the appeal.
- Any evidence received after the appeal has been made will not be accepted.
- The decision made by the Appeal Committee shall be final.

Respect

All players, coaches, team officials and match officials, must be committed to promoting inclusivity, and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.

- Any allegations of discriminatory behavior brought to the attention of the Tournament Committee shall be fully investigated. Any player/team found guilty shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions.
- All matters of discipline, and sanctions shall be handled by the Disciplinary Committee.