



State Cup and Travel Rules

Coaches and Team Managers,

It's state cup time again, which means it's January and time to think about weather contingencies. We had a few incidents during the league season, but now the stakes go up during the state cups in terms of 1) meaning of the games, 2) possibility of fines and being dropped from the tournament for a no-show, and 3) the overall higher chance of winter conditions during our dead-of-winter months. There's lots of info in the state cup rules regarding proactive procedures for game scheduling, reschedules, notifying the opponent, etc. Here we'll just focus on what happens a day before the game, or the day-of, when there's either snow in the forecast or the white stuff is already blanketing the ground.

Who has the authority to cancel a game? First of all, please be aware that rarely, if ever, will games be canceled based solely on the weather forecast. The meteorologists freely admit they don't have the gift of prophecy when it comes to snowfall. Here's what the state cup rules have to say:

V. D) All tournament games shall be played on the day scheduled. To declare a field unplayable due to adverse weather conditions will be the prerogative of the referee, the Tournament Committee Chair(s) and the Competition Development Manager. If games are canceled due to an unplayable field or adverse weather that prevents a team from traveling to the venue site, the Tournament Committee Chair(s) and the Competition Development Manager will determine the rescheduling. Game may be left not played if applicable, in which case no points will be awarded for either team.

Now obviously, if the local parks department or school district closes the field, the game won't be played. And the rule states that if the referee shows at the field and declares it unplayable, no game. Other than that, it's in the hands of the WYS tournament authorities, with advisement of the home association that knows what the local field conditions are, and under whatever travel proclamations have been issued by the governments. Note that even if the two teams decide between themselves not to play the game, it's still up to the tournament authorities.

Advice based on an incident last year. This happened to a team from another club based in Western Washington. There was snow in the passes, and the going was slow. After it took four hours to get to Ellensburg, the coach knew he wasn't going to make it to the field in time, called the opposing coach from there and said he was turning around. The story – and there's always two sides to these types of incidents – is that the coach said he had no interest in moving the game to a later time in the day. The coach never followed up with his association's cup rep, and never contacted the WYS office. Meanwhile on that day, many other teams made similar trips over the same roads successfully. As a result, the vote (by the WYS tournament authorities and association state cup representatives) was to declare a forfeit, and therefore drop the team from the tournament under state cup rules. Bottom line? Communicate, communicate, communicate. Track who you called, and when. Call your state cup rep. Show a good faith effort to get to the game, and you will be more likely to earn a reschedule rather than a forfeit.

It's worth recapping the advice that Karen Barlett, last year's state cup rep, passed on to us all in the wake of this incident:

- As soon as you know who you are playing, contact them and see if you can have a game with a later start time. (Rules are between 10 am and 4 pm if traveling more than 75 miles – see state cup rule V. F) – but noon or 1 pm is more reasonable and if you ask early, odds are better).
- Have a plan ahead of time:
 - Allow plenty of time for the drive. Use the weather forecast as a barometer of how much time you should allow to get to the game. This may require spending the night if you're playing in Spokane.
 - Arrange "bad-weather" carpools, relying on families that are prepared for winter driving. Have contact info and cell phone numbers for each, in case conditions change.
 - Likewise, have cell numbers for the opposing coach and manager, and ensure they have yours, before you leave. If the unexpected happens while you're en route, let them know the situation. See if the game can be delayed.
- If you decide not to travel and/or turn around, definitely contact our SYSA state cup rep, Cyndy Masada. Call Cyndy's cell, *and* follow up with an e-mail. Also, coaches, let your coaching supervisor know, and if you can't reach that person, then call Jimmy or Jason.
- If you're the home team and your opponent has issues getting to the Seattle area, contact Phoebe Russell, SYSA scheduler. It might be possible to move the game a few hours later or something. She's been known to work miracles — but only if you ask.

Key contact information:

SYSA scheduler	Phoebe Russell	206-933-5769	phoeberuss@comcast.net
SYSA state cup rep	Cyndy Masada	206-399-8004	sysa.statecuprep@gmail.com

WYS Travel Policy. The WYS Travel Policy came out last year, and it's most useful when conditions are obviously bad. In the past, teams have made heroic efforts to get to games, such as taking commercial flights or driving through the Columbia Gorge. But the policy is not necessarily applicable to just cross-state travel. It says that if the primary route(s) to a game are closed or chains are required by the state DOT, you may opt out of making the trip. Attached. Note the timeframes given for making the decision.

If you need to make a decision under the Travel Policy, here are a few helpful links on the State Department of Transportation Web site:

Pass Conditions: <http://wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/>

Frequently Asked Questions for Winter Driving: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter/faq.htm>

Final Note. The WYS Travel Policy is a welcome addition, and brings clarity to a clear-cut situation. Other situations aren't so clear-cut. The rules are meant to promote successful completion of a tournament during an unpredictable time of year, not to encourage putting families in harm's way. The ultimate decision about whether, when and how to drive in inclement weather is always up to each driver.

Wishing safe travels, and may traction tires never be required ...

'Til next time,
Phil



Washington Youth Soccer Travel Policy

By entering a Washington Youth Soccer State Sponsored tournament/league, including Cup Tournaments, State League, and Regional Club League, teams agree to make *every effort* to play all of their games.

Safety is always our number one priority. It is not required nor expected for teams to take an alternate route that is much farther than the original direct route in order to make a game. It is impossible to cover all situations that may arise due to inclement weather in one document; therefore any situation not covered below will be referred to the corresponding Washington Youth Soccer staff program manager to determine further action.

Inclement Weather Travel Policy

Road Closures

If a roadway necessary to reach a game location is closed either 24 hours prior to game time when teams are staying overnight or 6 hours prior to game time when teams are traveling the day of the game, per the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for reasons other than regularly scheduled maintenance closures, then the game will need to be rescheduled through the State Sponsored tournament/league representative. If the game is unable to be rescheduled, the program committee and/or staff program manager for the State Sponsored tournament/league will flip a coin to decide the game results if results are needed for advancement.

Chains Required

If roadways are open but chains are required, a team may opt not to travel. These games must be rescheduled as soon as possible at the original home team's site. If either team refuses the reschedule, the team refusing will accept a loss for the game. It will be recorded as a 0-1 loss and any unrecoverable game expenses the other team incurred for the unplayed game may be submitted to the Washington Youth Soccer office for *review* to be reimbursed by the team opting out of travel. In addition to reimbursing the opponent for the unrecoverable game expenses, the team declining/refusing to reschedule may also be subject to forfeit fees as applicable in accordance with each State Sponsored tournament/league rules of competition. See reimbursement policy below.

If roadways are open 4-24 hours before game time with no requirement for chains per WSDOT, and a team does not travel to the game, then they will be issued a forfeit loss. The team earning the forfeit loss will not advance in the tournament/league; additionally, the team may be subject to fines per the State Sponsored tournament/leagues rules. Any unrecoverable game expenses the hosting team incurred for the unplayed game may be submitted to the Washington Youth Soccer office for *review* to be reimbursed by the team opting out of travel. See reimbursement policy below.

Reimbursement Policy

Unrecoverable game expenses include field and referee fees. These fees will vary across the state therefore reimbursement for unrecoverable game expenses shall not exceed \$500.00.

The team refusing to reschedule will be billed by Washington Youth Soccer for the approved unrecoverable expenses from the original unplayed game. It is the team's responsibility to pay the invoice within 30 days. If payment is not received within 30 days, WA Youth Soccer will then invoice the team's Member Association for the unpaid balance. Team penalties for outstanding balances will include ineligibility for the specific team to compete in any current or future state-sanctioned competition until payment is received. Association penalties for outstanding team balances will include probation or suspension of participation of the Association's teams in future state-sanctioned competitions.

[Click here to download the form for submitting reimbursement requests.](#)



Washington Youth Soccer Travel Policy

Unplayable Fields Policy

Declared by Facility or Local Soccer Administration

If the field is declared unplayable by the facility or the local soccer administration and the hosting team is notified by the facility/local soccer administrator, the hosting team is required to notify the traveling team as soon as possible. It is recommended that the home team makes every effort to find an alternate playing field for the originally scheduled game time and maintains contact with the away team during the process.

If an alternate field cannot be found, the unplayable game needs to be rescheduled as soon as possible through the appropriate tournament/league representative. If a team had already traveled less than 100 miles one-way to the original unplayable game site and an alternative field is not available, the rescheduled game will be rescheduled at the original Home Team's facility. If the team traveled over 100 miles one-way to the original site, the game will be rescheduled at a neutral* field to minimize travel. The home team will not be responsible for hotel/travel costs that may be incurred by the away team if a facility declares the fields unplayable. If the game is unable to be rescheduled, the program committee and/or staff program manager for the State Sponsored tournament/league will flip a coin to decide the game results if results are needed for advancement.

Declared by Referee Crew

If the field is not declared unplayable by the facility, the assigned referee crew for the game may declare the field unplayable 15 minutes – 1 hour prior to game time. The referee crew must be onsite and will consult with the referee assignor and/or field scheduler to determine if alternate options are available – i.e. relocation, delay, reschedule, etc. to declare if a field is unplayable. If the game cannot be played, the game needs to be rescheduled as soon as possible through the appropriate tournament/league representative. If a team had already traveled less than 100 miles one-way to the original unplayable game site and an alternative field is not available, the rescheduled game will be rescheduled at the original Home Team's facility. If the team traveled over 100 miles one-way to the original site, the game will be rescheduled at a neutral* field to minimize travel. If the game is unable to be rescheduled, the program committee and/or staff program manager for the State Sponsored tournament/league will flip a coin to decide the game results if results are needed for advancement.

* A neutral field is defined as a field outside of each team's Association boundaries that provides close to or equal travel distance and is agreed upon by both teams. For help facilitating the neutral site, contact the State Sponsored tournament/league administrator.