# Eastern Iowa United -U13-U14 Boys

# Practice and Game Attendance Rules

# 2026-2027 Season

**History and Collaboration Statement.**

Eastern Iowa United (EIU) is a joint venture spearheaded by two historic and long-standing Eastern Iowa competitive soccer clubs — Iowa Soccer Club (ISC), based in Iowa City, and Cedar River Soccer Association (CRSA), based in Cedar Rapids. ISC and CRSA have come together to provide this unique competitive experience.

ISC and CRSA are excited to work together to form a U13 and U14 boys' team which will compete in the Heartland division of the MLS Next Academy Division. EIU MLS Next teams offer the most dedicated, talented, and driven players in this area the opportunity to compete against some of the top players in the Midwest.

Both ISC and CRSA look forward to this exciting project to establish Eastern Iowa United as one of Iowa's premier organizations for player development.

## EIU CORE VALUES

RESPECT PERSEVERANCE COMMITMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Respect-**Regardless of the outcome of the game, the EIU players and coaching staff will always demonstrate their respect to the referees, opponent, and opposing fans.

**Perseverance-** The EIU playing experience will teach the kids how to overcome challenges, deal with adversity, and we want the experience to instill in the kids a fierce competitiveness centered around the need to serve the team.

**Commitment:** The players in the EIU and the EIU coaching staff will work hard to build team success together through the long process of day-to-day improvement. Our players are committed to each other also and will support each other in this journey.

**Development-**Selection to the EIU is only the beginning of the player development process. We will strive to win games, and we will strive to develop all individuals on the team.

**These core values will guide the management, coaching, and selection of teams for the U13-U14 Boys MLS Next Academy teams.**

**These core values will guide the players' behavior and our expectations of the players at all EIU events, practices, and competitions.**

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# 2026-2027 Competition Schedule

# U13-U14 EIU Teams

## Fall 2026 Season

### August 2026 EVENTS

- August 8-9, 2026- MLS Next ROUND UP – (St. Louis, MO) -OPTIONAL EVENT
- August 15-16, 2026 (POSSIBLE CDL League Games in Iowa)
- August 22-23, 2026 (POSSIBLE CDL League Games in Iowa)
- August 29-30, 2026 (POSSIBLE CDL League Games in Iowa)

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## SEPTEMBER 12-NOVEMBER 15, 2026

## MLS NEXT LEAGUE GAMES

Games will start the weekend of September 12-13, 2026, and conclude the weekend of November 14-15, 2026. During this 10-week period, the team will play 13 MLS Next games during the fall 2026 season. We do not know yet if MLS Next games will be scheduled on all 10 weekends, but it is likely that we will play MLS Next games during at least 7 of these 10 weekends.

We will likely have at least 3-4 travel weekends during the season**.**

**POSSIBLE TRAVEL LOCATIONS FOR THE FALL SEASON FOR MLS NEXT LEAGUE GAMES.**

- **St. Louis, Mo**
- **Kansas City, MO**
- **Springfield, MO**
- **Omaha, NE**
- **Wichita, KS**
- **Des Moines, IA**

**HOME GAMES WILL LIKELY BE PLAYED IN IOWA CITY ON THE TURF FIELDS AT THE HAWKEYE RECREATION COMPLEX OR AT TBK IN BETTENDORF ON THE TURF FIELDS.**

## SPRING 2027 Season

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## MARCH 5, 2026-MAY 23, 2026

## MLS NEXT LEAGUE GAMES

Games will start on the weekend of March 6-7, 2027, and conclude the weekend of May 15-16 or May 22-23, 2027. There will be one weekend during this time frame from March 6- May 23 when the teams will play in Kanas City for the MLS Cup Qualifier which is not part of the regular season games. That weekend is April 23-26, 2206. We will also block out one more weekend during the spring break time frame. We hope to finish our games before May 22-23 so we can participate in the state cup in Iowa. During this 9-week period, the team will play 13 MLS Next games during the Spring 2027 season. We do not know yet if MLS Next games will be scheduled on all 9 weekends, but it is likely that we will play MLS Next games during at least 7 of these 9 weekends.

Like the fall season, we will likely have at least 3-4 travel weekends during the season**.**

**POSSIBLE TRAVEL LOCATIONS FOR THE FALL SEASON FOR MLS NEXT LEAGUE GAMES.**

- **St. Louis, Mo**
- **Kansas City, MO**
- **Springfield, MO**
- **Omaha, NE**
- **Wichita, KS**
- **Des Moines, IA**

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## APRIL 23-26, 2026-KANSAS CITY, MO

## MLS NEXT CUP QUALIFIER

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**STATE CUP IN IOWA -**This is contingent on approval from MLS next that we can participate in the event.

Weekend #1-May 22-23, 2027

Weekend #2-May 29-30, 2027

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# Summary of requirements for EIU Players:

- Outdoor Game attendance requirements for fall and spring seasons.
- Practice Requirements.

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### Summary of Game Attendance Requirements for all EIU Players:

### We will select up to 22 players on each MLS Next team. We will bring up to 17 players to MLS Next League games and up to 18 to some other events.

**(This means that 5 players will be assigned to sit out each weekend. With this rotation system, all players will have access to no less than 9 MLS Next games each season.)**

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Fall 2026 Season – **13 Total Games Required**

1. If selected to the U13 or U14 EIU MLS NEXT team, each member of the team must participate in **4 CDL games within the state of Iowa**.
2. If selected to the U13 or U14 EIU MLS Next team, each member of the team must participate in no less than 9 **MLS Next league games.**

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Spring 2027 Season – **Total of 17 Games Required**

9 MLS Next games, All State Cup Games, and MLS Next Cup Qualifier- for the Spring 2027 season.

1. If selected to the U13 or U14 EIU MLS Next team, each member of the team must participate in no less than **9 MLS Next league games**.
2. If selected to the U13 or U14 EIU MLS Next team, each member of the team must participate in the **MLS Next Cup Qualifier** in Kansas City in April 2027.

   We will only be allowed to have 18 players participate in each MLS Next Cup qualifier game, but all 22 players will be included on the roster for this weekend, and each player will be assigned to games with the EIU team during this event.

(There will be exceptions for the required travel to the MLS Next Cup Qualifier in Kansas City if your son has an injury, illness, or your family has an emergency you must handle. In addition, if your family demonstrates that you have a long-standing family commitment such as a wedding or other important family event that cannot be changed, exceptions will be made if you communicate with the Directors of the EIU.)

3. If selected to the U13 or U14 EIU MLS Next team, each member of the team must participate in both weekends of the **Iowa State Cup**.

    - We will only be allowed to have 18 players participate in each state cup game, but all 22 players will be included on the EIU state cup roster for the state cup. Each player will be assigned to games with the EIU team at the state cup.

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# EIU GAME ATTENDANCE AND PRACTICE ATTENDANCE POLICIES

There are player status implications for players that do not meet the game attendance and practice attendance requirements detailed in this document.

- If a player withdraws from two weekend events or more that they have committed to during the 2026-2027 soccer year, they will be moved to provisional status.
- Players will also be moved to provisional status if they do not meet their game attendance requirements for one of the 2 seasons listed above.
- Players will also be moved to provisional status if there are two occasions during the 2026-2027 season when the player fails to report that they did not meet the practice requirements for a week and then attempted to play in the match without meeting the requirements.
- Finally, players will be moved to provisional status if they do not meet their practice obligations listed in the next section of this document.

Once a player is moved to provisional status, they will need to meet both the practice and game requirements for a period of 6 months before they can return to their full status as an EIU MLS Next Participant. In addition, if players finish the 2026-2027 season as a provisional status member, they may not be provided the opportunity to return for the following year with the EIU team.

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## Practice Attendance and Requirement Details for all U13-U14 EIU Players:

For the 2026-2027 season, required practices will start the week of August 3, 2026.

**Practice Locations for Outdoor Practices:**

Hawkeye Recreation Fields-Iowa City, IA

CRSA Soccer Complex-Cedar Rapids, IA

**Breakdown of Practices-OUTDOOR PERIOD:**

The U13 Boys will practice 2 times per week in Cedar Rapids during the fall and spring season and 1 time per week in Iowa City during the fall and spring season.

The U14 Boys will practice 2 times per week in Iowa City during the fall and spring season and 1 time per week in Cedar Rapids during the fall and spring season.

**Breakdown of Practices-INDOOR PERIOD:**

The U13 and U14 boys will each practice 1 time per week in Iowa City and 1 time per week in Cedar Rapids. In addition, they will practice a third time locally. The Iowa City U13 and U14 boys will practice together once per week and the Cedar Rapids U13 and U14 boys will practice together once per week in Cedar Rapids.

## Practice Attendance Requirements for EIU U13-U14 Players:

FALL OUTDOOR PERIOD:

- August 3, 2026-November 13, 2026: 3 Times Per week required.

Winter INDOOR PERIOD:

- November 30, 2026-December 18, 2026: 3 Times Per week required.
- January 4, 2027-February 26, 2027: 3 Timer Per week required.

SPRING OUTDOOR PERIOD:

- March 1, 2027-May 28, 2027: 3 Times Per week required.

**Policy for Practice Exceptions Related to Illness-2026-2027**

- Players will be granted a limited number of practice exceptions for illness. We do not want players to attend practice if they are sick. Players will have a limited number of excused absences for illness which will provide kids with the opportunity to play games even if they did not fulfill their practice obligation during the week that they were sick.

- Each player will be given 3 separate weeks during the 2026-2027 season when they will be allowed to miss their practice requirements due to illness without any consequence to their eligibility to participate in the games for the weekend. For the U13-U14 players, a written medical excuse will not be required. An email to your team coach and the Directors will suffice for players at this age.

- Once a player has exceeded the 3 allowable weeks for illness, they will need to meet their weekly practice requirements to be eligible to participate in games. If they unfortunately miss another week due to illness and are unable to meet their practice requirement for the week, they will not be allowed to participate in the games on the weekend.

**Policy for Practice Exceptions Related to Injury-2026-2027**

- Players will be granted a limited number of practice exceptions for injuries. We do not want players to practice if they are injured. Players will be provided with a limited number of excused absences for injury which will provide kids with the opportunity to play games even if they did not fulfill their practice obligation during the week that they were injured.

- Each player will be given 3 separate weeks during the 2026-2027 season when they will be allowed to waive their practice requirements due to injury and still be eligible to participate in games. For the U13-U14 players, a written medical excuse will not be required. An email to your team coach and the Directors will suffice for players at this age. However, we highly encourage parents to consider the increased injury risks of entering a game without any practice time for the player to test whether they are prepared to return to play.

- Once a player has exceeded the 3 allowable weeks for injury, they will need to meet their weekly practice requirements to be eligible to participate in games. Players that are injured will NOT be required to make up previously missed practices due to injury, but if they have exceeded the 3-week exception period, they must meet their practice requirements for the week preceding the match to be eligible for the weekend matches.

**Policy for Vacation or Travel Exceptions-2026-2027**

- Players will be granted a limited number of practice exceptions for vacation or travel.
- Each player will be granted 3 weeks during the 2026-2027 season when they will be permitted to waive their practice requirements due to family travel or vacation. During any of these 3 weeks, players will be allowed to miss training and still be eligible to participate in games if they return from vacation/travel prior to the weekend games. Parents will need to communicate effectively and email both their child's team coach and the Directors to notify the coach and Director that their child will miss practices for travel or vacation. The 3 permitted weeks for travel or vacation are in addition to the 2 weeks that all players have off after the fall season from November and the other 2 weeks they have off during the winter break.
- Once a player has exceeded the 3 allowable weeks for travel or vacation, they will need to meet their weekly practice requirements to be eligible to participate in games.

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## Frequently Asked Questions for Practice Attendance

- What happens if the U13-U14 player does not meet their weekly practice obligations?

  To be eligible to play games, the U13-U14 player must attend their required practices per week with their assigned team. If they cannot participate in the required practices during a given week with their assigned team, the player will not be allowed to play in any game scheduled on the weekend. However, there is a complete list of exceptions for illness, injury, and vacations earlier in this document that parents should reference to note how many weeks players could miss for illness, injury, or travel and still be eligible to play the games on the weekends.

- Can the U13-U14 players attend other EIU team practices or optional practices to meet their weekly practice obligations?

  Yes, with some limitations. The other EIU practice that the player uses to make up for their own missed practice must be approved by the two co-technical Directors, Alen and Jon. However, the co-technical directors will not provide this opportunity for players more than 3 times per season. This means that if a player is given an exception by the co -technical Directors of EIU to make up practice with the other EIU team, this will only be permitted 3 times per season.

- Does the EIU 13U-14U player need to meet their weekly practice obligations even during weeks when there are no scheduled games on the weekend?

  Yes. If players do not meet their practice obligation during the week preceding a weekend without a game, they will not be eligible to play in the games for the following weekend.

- Can the U13-U14 EIU players attend another EIU team practice for other practice opportunities even though they have already met their practice requirement with their assigned team?

  No. The only situation when a U13 player will be permitted to attend the EIU U14 team practice will be when the U13 player is granted an exception to make up a missed practice with their own team. The same rule applies to U14 players who may want to attend the EIU U13 team practice.

- What happens if practice is rained out or cancelled?

  If the practice is cancelled, all players on the team can count that practice as if they attended. However, if the practice is moved indoors at a time reasonably close to the normal scheduled time for the practice, the practice is not considered cancelled. This means that players are responsible to check the practice updates and always have indoor and outdoor shoes available.

- How is the practice rule enforced?

  Players are expected to self-report to the head coach via email and they must also copy the EIU Directors to notify the coaches that the weekly practice obligation was not met. If a player does not **self-report** to both their head coach and the EIU Directors via-mail by 10:30 pm on the Thursday night prior to the weekend game and then attempts to play in the games even though they did not meet their practice requirements, the player will be suspended from all matches for 2 weeks. If this happens a 2nd time during the same soccer year from August 1-July 31, the player will be moved to provisional status.

- What happens if a player misses multiple weeks due to injury?

  Players that miss multiple weeks due to injury will NOT need to make up missed practices from weeks that have passed. It is not in the best long-term health interest of an athlete that was injured to try and make up missed practices for weeks that have already passed.

- Does the club offer make-ups as an option during the next week after a player missed a practice? In other words, can a player request to do 3 practices the next week to make up for 1 missed practice during a given week?

NO.

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## THE EIU Playing Time/Development Guarantee to our U13-U14 players:

If each player meets our minimal standards of commitment outlined above **AND** they adhere to the EIU Core Values, we will provide the following playing time guarantees for all outdoor games:

**All players are guaranteed to play half of each game in all MLS Next League games, CDL games, and non-state cup tournaments that they are assigned to.**

**All players are guaranteed to play 30% of each game in all MLS Cup Qualifier Cup games that they are assigned to and all State Cup games that they are assigned to.**

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## 2026-2027

## Eastern Iowa United -Game Commitment Policies

If a family must withdraw their son from a tournament, league weekend, or MLS next event, the withdrawal is documented. Please note that withdrawal from even one game of a tournament, one game of a league weekend, or one game of an MLS next event is considered a full withdrawal from the weekend.

If an EIU player pulls out of two weekends of games during the 2026-2027 soccer year, for a weekend that they made a commitment to playing in, they will be moved to provisional status.

## Accepted Excuses for withdrawing from a league game, tournament, or MLS Next event:

Medical or family emergencies are excusable reasons for pulling out of a league game, tournament, or MLS Next event. If an injury, illness, or family emergency prevents your child from participating in the scheduled games, the withdrawal will not have any impact on your child's status as a full member of the EIU team.

Family emergencies may be a funeral, a very ill family member, or some other family crisis that you feel must be attended to immediately.

The EIU will not make exceptions for parents who commit their son to a league game, tournament, or MLS next event and then the parents realize that they have a family event planned for that

weekend, such as a wedding, graduation, or reunion and then withdraw from the weekend. We do not require the players to attend all events and we understand that some weekends the kids will need to miss for weddings and other important family events, but we ask that you are careful when you commit to the games that you don't schedule your son to play on weekends when these events are scheduled.

## What happens if I need to withdraw my son for only one game of a tournament, league weekend, or MLS Next event that I committed them to?

If you notify us that your son can no longer participate in a tournament, league game weekend, or MLS Next event that they had committed to, you will be notified that your son will be removed from the roster for all of the other games that weekend. In some situations, parents notify us that their son will only miss one of the games of the tournament, MLS Next event, or league game weekend. Our policy is clear that our commitment requires participation in all games of the weekend. Therefore, even if your son will only miss one game, they will not be included on the roster for any of the other games for the tournament, league weekend, or MLS next event, and the withdrawal will be documented.

### 3) Game withdrawal procedures.

If you need to withdraw your son from a game, this includes tournaments, MLS Next games, CDL games, or MLS Next events that they committed to playing in, please contact us as soon as possible so we can do our best to adjust the rosters.

As was mentioned above**,** if an injury, illness, or family emergency prevents your child from participating in the league game weekend, tournament, or MLS Next event, that your son was signed up to play in, the withdrawal will not have an impact on your child's status as a full member of the Eastern Iowa United team.

If you pull out of a league game or tournament, please follow the procedure below:

1) Email the team coach and the directors.

Thanks for taking the time to read and review these policies.

Thanks,
Jon Cook-ISC Director and EIU Co- Technical Director
Alen Kudumovic -CRSA Director and EIU Co- Technical Director

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