



FOOTBALL
NORTHERN
TERRITORY

2026 FUTSAL CUP RULES AND COMPETITION SPECIFICATIONS

FNT FUTSAL CUP 2026 - RULES AND COMPETITION SPECIFICATIONS

Tournament Format and Eligibility

- The tournament is a 5-a-side format, which includes 4 outfield players and a goalkeeper.
- Squad sizes must be between 8 and 10 players.
- Eligibility is strictly based on birth year.
- Players are permitted to move up a maximum of two age groups. (ie; 2014 born can play up to U14)
- No exemptions will be granted for player eligibility.

Match Format

- All matches will consist of 15-minute continuous halves.
- A central horn will be used to signal the start and end of play.
- To maximise the flow of the tournament, there will be no changing of ends at half-time.
- Slide tackling is strictly prohibited for all outfield players across all age groups.
- Unauthorised entry onto the pitch is prohibited to ensure participant safety.

Competition Standings

- Group standings are determined primarily by competition points.
- If teams are tied, standings will be decided by head-to-head results, followed by goal difference.
- Any knockout ties will be resolved by penalty shootouts.

Day-Specific Rule Modifications

- Day 1 (U8, U10, U12): Matches have a development focus, meaning modified 4-second and pass-back rules will be applied.
- Day 2 (U14, U16): Matches will strictly enforce the 2025-26 FIFA Futsal Laws of the Game, including full adherence to the 5-metre distancing rule.

FNT FUTSAL CUP - LAW VARIATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

Fouls and restarts

- **Accumulated fouls:** The six-foul limit will not be enforced. All fouls will result in a standard direct or indirect free kick from the spot of the infringement, without 10-metre penalties for accumulated team fouls.
- **Slide tackling:** Slide tackling remains strictly prohibited for all outfield players to ensure safety. However, referees will focus on education, awarding a standard free kick and explaining the danger, rather than issuing immediate yellow cards unless a challenge is deemed genuinely reckless.

Time limits and technique

- **The 4-second rule:** Referees will provide a clear, visible, and audible four-second count for kick-ins, corners, and goal clearances. To promote learning, referees may offer a quick explanation and a retake rather than an immediate turnover if the count is exceeded.
- **Kick-in technique:** Referees will be lenient regarding strict foot placement on the touchline and a perfectly stationary ball. Minor technical errors will result in a quick correction and a retake rather than handing possession to the opposition.

Goalkeeper rules

- **Pass-back rule:** The standard rule preventing a goalkeeper from touching the ball a second time in their own half is removed. Teams can freely use their goalkeeper to recycle possession without conceding an indirect free kick.
- **Distribution:** To encourage playing out from the back, goalkeepers are not permitted to throw or drop-kick the ball directly over the halfway line on the full. The ball must bounce or touch a player within their own half first.

Substitutions

- **Interchange procedures:** To simplify match management and reduce technical fouls, substitutions do not need to be made on the fly through a designated zone. Changes can instead occur during a stoppage in play with the referee's permission.



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