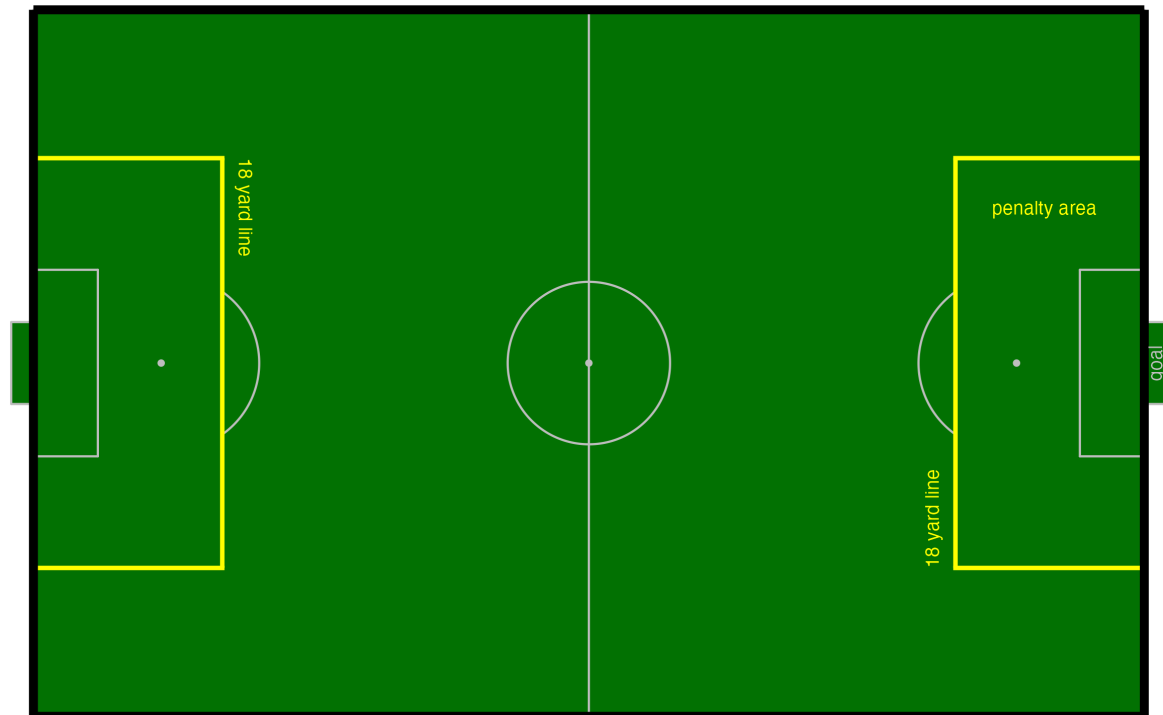


# SOCCER OVERVIEW

Arguably the world's most popular sport, soccer, or football in most of the world, is a captivating sport played between two teams, each comprising 11 players, on a rectangular field with goals at either end. The objective is simple yet profound: score more goals than the opposing team. The game unfolds with a blend of skill, strategy, and teamwork, where players employ their feet, head, and occasionally other body parts, but not their hands, to maneuver the ball across the field.

Teams alternate fluidly between offensive and defensive roles, striving to outmaneuver opponents and create goal-scoring opportunities. Soccer is dynamic, with players constantly shifting between attacking and defensive modes. This dynamic and fluid nature makes soccer difficult to model and predict.

Matches are overseen by referees who enforce rules and ensure fair play. However, soccer is notable for the high level of home-field advantage; possibly caused by referee subconscious bias for the home team. Fouls result in free kicks or penalties, providing opportunities for strategic plays and potential goals.



# SOCCER OVERVIEW: THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Often referred to as "the beautiful game" due to the elegance, simplicity, and universal appeal inherent in its play. The game's beauty lies in its simplicity, fostering creativity, athleticism, and teamwork. The continuous ebb and flow of the game, the joy of a well-executed goal, and the intensity of competition contribute to soccer's global allure.

Several factors contribute to this nickname:

- **Fluidity and Creativity:** Soccer is characterized by its fluid, continuous play. Players use their feet to control the ball, showcasing remarkable skill, creativity, and agility. The back-and-forth nature of the game creates a dynamic and unpredictable spectacle.
- **Global Unification:** Soccer transcends cultural, linguistic, and geographical barriers. Its popularity spans the globe, uniting people from diverse backgrounds. The shared passion for the sport contributes to a sense of global unity and community.
- **Simplicity and Accessibility:** Soccer's rules are relatively simple, requiring minimal equipment. All that is needed is a ball and an open space, making it accessible to people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. This simplicity contributes to its widespread appeal.
- **Teamwork and Strategy:** Soccer emphasizes teamwork, requiring coordinated efforts among players to achieve success. The strategic aspects of the game, including formations, tactics, and player positioning, add depth and complexity to its beauty.
- **Moments of Brilliance:** The game is punctuated by moments of brilliance, such as skillful dribbles, precise passes, and spectacular goals. These moments capture the essence of the sport's beauty and leave lasting impressions on spectators.

# NORTH AMERICAN SOCCER LEAGUE (NSL)

The North American Soccer League (NSL) is a fictitious, but realistic soccer (or football for those outside the US) league created by generative AI and Wharton researchers in 2024.

The game results are synthetic but realistic; they were created using a model informed by professional soccer. NLS results are similar to observed results in high-level professional soccer matches.





# NSL TEAM LOCATIONS

The North American Soccer League (NSL) is made up of 28 teams that are set in real locations within the United States and Canada.












# NSL TEAM STRUCTURE

These 28 teams are divided into two conferences - Eastern Conference and Western Conference - each with 14 teams.

## Western Conference

## Eastern Conference

Eugene Enforcers FC 	Tacoma Thunderbolts FC 	Albuquerque Scorpions FC 	Oakland Olympians FC 	Augusta Arrows FC 	Little Rock Legends FC 	Jackson Jaguars FC 	San Juan Strikers FC 
Fargo Falcons FC 	Tucson Torpedos FC 	Anchorage Avalanche FC 	Reno Rapids FC 	Charleston Mariners FC 	Manchester Meteors FC 	Laredo Lancers FC 	Springfield Storm FC 
Fort Collins Foxes FC 	Wichita Warriors FC 	Bakersfield Bandits FC 	Saskatoon Spartans FC 	Des Moines Dynamo FC 	Mobile Mavericks FC 	Lexington Lynx FC 	Toledo Titans FC 
Boise Thunderhawks FC 	Sioux Falls Sabers FC 	Dover Dragons FC 	Providence Pioneers FC 				

# NSL REGULAR SEASON

During the regular season, each of the 28 NSL teams plays a total of 34 games.

Each team plays all the other 13 teams in their conference twice - once at home and once away. Additionally, each team plays 8 games against a random set of teams in the other conference - four of which are at home and the other four games are away.

	Home	Away	Total
<b>Within Conference</b>	13	13	26
<b>Outside Conference</b>	4	4	8
<b>Total</b>	17	17	34



# NSL PLAYOFF STRUCTURE

Similar to the World Cup format:  
Group Stage, followed by  
Knockout Stage.



# NSL PLAYOFF STRUCTURE – DETAILS

## Group Stage

The 28 teams are divided into 7 groups of 4 teams. Each group contains a high seed from both the Eastern and Western Conference as well as a low seed from both conferences.

Within each group, each of the 4 teams plays 3 games, for a total of 6 games per group and 42 games for the entire group round.

### *Game locations: Home - Away*

Within each group, the two higher-ranked teams play 2 of their 3 games at home, while the two lower-ranked teams play only 1 of their 3 games at home.

## Knockout stage

The top team from the Group Stage advances to the single elimination stage.

### *Game locations: Neutral site*

All knockout stage games are played at a neutral site, so there is no home-field advantage.

All playoff games end in a win or a loss; there are no ties.  
There are no shootouts; normal play continues until there is a winner.