There are many different types of formats that you can choose from for your tournament. The type you chose will depend on many factors; the number of teams you have participating, the time frame for your tournament, the competition level and desires of the participating team, and many other factors. The following discussion of the more common formats of tournaments should help you decide which format is best for your tournament.

Types of Tournament Formats:

1. Round Robin	This type of tournament is really like league play. A team that plays all the other teams in a season has played a round robin league. In a tournament, this type is used if you have an uneven number of teams in an age division, say you have 5 teams. They would play each other (4 games) and you would determine the winner by points.
2. Single Elimination	This type of tournament matches up teams for the first round. The winner moves on to play the winner of one of the other matchups; the loser is finished. If you are familiar with the NCAA Basketball tournament, it is a single-elimination tournament.
3. Pool Play	This is the most common tournament format in youth soccer. It is really a multi-tiered round robin tournament. Round robin format for the pool play portion of the tournament, then a single elimination format for the "medal round". Some tournaments even add to the medal round by adding a consolation game for the losers.
4. Double Elimination	In this tournament format, the winners move on to play other winners to continue to advance. The losers in the first round will play other losers; the winners of this second round can continue to advance and play other winners; the losers of this round are finished. This type of tournament is rare since it requires a lot more games to be played and teams won't know their next game time or place until they finish their current game. It also puts more pressure on the tournament scorekeeping staff to move teams into the appropriate next bracket.
5. Multi-Level	Most league playoffs match up the winners of their divisions with each other. An Area Playoff will match up the League winners of their Regions in a tournament-type playoffs. Leagues will match up their top 2 or 4 or more teams into a playoff. In this case, the individual Regions or the individual Leagues play a round robin type of tournament to determine their winners. The playoffs themselves are then one of the other four tournament types.

Further discussion of tournament types:

Single Elimination

The greatest appeal of the single-elimination tournament is its simplicity. Losers are eliminated, and winners advance to the next round until there is only one contestant left, the tournament champion. The single-elimination tourney is valuable when the number of entries is large, time is short, and the number of playing areas is limited. Of all the tournaments, this one requires the fewest games; however, half the participants are eliminated after one game, and only one-quarter of the participants remain after the second round. When more extensive participation is important and more playing areas and time are available, using this tourney is not advisable. Furthermore, you can easily organize other tournaments in this manual, so the simplicity of single elimination is not a significant factor in its favor.

Probably the best use for this type of tournament is play-offs at the end of a season or following a longer tournament such as a split round robin. You would then determine seeding for the single elimination by the standings at the conclusion of the previous playing period.

Double Elimination

The double-elimination tournament is designed to address two problems inherent in the single-elimination tournament. The first is that one of the best entries may have a bad first game or have been poorly seeded in the single-elimination draw; if that occurs in a single-elimination tournament, that entry is eliminated too soon. Having a losers' bracket gives such an entry an opportunity to play in the finals. The second problem with the single elimination is that half of the entries play only one game. The double elimination ensures that all entries play at least two games.

However, this tournament type is often overrated because of those strengths. It also has weaknesses, and there are good alternatives. The major difficulties with the double elimination are that the second- and third-seeded players play many games, particularly in the final rounds of the tournament, and it takes many rounds to complete. Also, this tournament type often does not use available areas efficiently. For example, if the tournament consists of nine entries and there are four playing areas available, the double-elimination tournament takes seven rounds to complete. This is as many rounds as in a round robin-double

The double elimination's major benefit is for situations in which the number of playing areas is limited, time is at a premium, final s

Multilevel

The multilevel tournament is similar to a single-elimination tournament; in fact, at the top level they are the same. However, in multilevel a player is not eliminated following a loss but simply moves down one or more levels of play into the consolation rounds. This downward movement continues until no other challengers remain. One result of this approach is that all players play about the same number of games. Another benefit is that in each round the players are more likely to encounter others of their caliber.

In the final rounds of play in single- and double-elimination tournaments, there are only one or two playing areas in use. This is not the case in the multilevel tournament. As a result, when sufficient playing areas are available, the multilevel tournament takes the same time to complete as a single-elimination tournament and half the time of a double-elimination tournament. For example, if six playing areas are available and the tournament contains 13 entries, it takes four rounds to complete the tournament using either the single elimination or the multilevel and eight rounds to complete a double elimination. The multilevel t

This tournament is perhaps most useful in physical education classes or intramural or recreational settings where eliminating play

Round Robin

The round robin tournament consists of all individuals or teams playing each entry an equal number of times. The round robin and round robin-split tournaments listed here have fixed schedules; all entries know exactly who they play and what time they play them, which offers some advantage to entries in preparing for the tournament and upcoming games. Seeding does not affect the outcome, because the cumulative results of all games played determine final standings. When the number of entries are few and games are played quickly (as in table tennis, badminton, or volleyball), this type of format is effective for a one-day tournament. When there are more entries and the games take longer to complete (as in hockey, football, or basketball), then a round robin schedule is best suited for league play. In this case, one time through a round robin provides the league schedule, and, if time permits, you could provide a home and away schedule simply by going through the round robin schedule twice.

The round robin format is not suitable for all situations. Because all entries play each other, a round robin format is problematic when the number of entries is high. For example, a tournament with 32 entries would take 496 games to complete using a round

Round Robin-Double Split

When a round robin format is desirable but the number of entries is too large, splitting the entries into two pools is a practical solution. Following the play within the pools, only the top two entries from each pool participate in play-offs to determine the final top standings. The obvious benefit is that the number of games is halved. The drawback is that proper seeding becomes important. For example, if the top three seeds are placed in one pool and only the top two from each pool advance to the play-offs, then (if entries perform consistent with their seedings) the third seed cannot play in the play-offs.

This format is commonly used for league play. You could split the league into two pools or divisions, with the play-offs bringing together the top two teams from each division to decide final standings.

Round Robin-Triple Split

The round robin-triple split is similar to the double split. However, because it would be awkward to have a single-elimination play-off with three or six finalists, a round robin format for the finalists is the most suitable. This requires more games in the play-offs and is a satisfactory alternative to the double split only when there is a very large number of entries.

Round Robin-Quadruple Split

This type of tournament is intended to solve the same problems addressed by the double split, but instead of dividing the entries into two groups, they are divided into four groups. This is useful only when the number of entries exceeds 11. You could use it in a one- or two-day tournament or in a league format over a longer time. The major disadvantage of this approach is that when there are only 12 to 15 entries, the weaker ones might participate in only two games.

Extended

Ladder and pyramid tournaments are two common examples of this tournament type. Extended tournaments can be ongoing for an indefinite time or can be abbreviated to a week, a month, or another desired period. For drop-in programs, such as intramurals or racquet clubs, this tournament type can be most useful. Its major weaknesses are, first, that players challenge each other and, therefore, some players may not play as much, and, second, because of the challenge system the ranking at the end of the tournament may not be accurate.

Pool Play Tournament Format - 16 Teams

(Multi-Tier Round-Robin w/Consolation)

Pool A

Team #	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Total Points
Team 1				
Team 2				
Team 3				
Team 4				

Pool B

Team #	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Total Points
Team 5				
Team 6				
Team 7				
Team 8				

Pool C

Total Points	Game 3	Game 2	Game 1	Team #
				Team 9
				Team 10
				Team 11
				Team 12

Pool D

Total Points	Game 3	Game 2	Game 1	Team #
				Team 13
				Team 14
				Team 15
				Team 16

W Pool A

W Pool B

Semi 1

W Semi 1

Final

W Semi 2

L Semi 1

Consolation

L Semi 2

W Pool C

W Pool D

Semi 2

Double-Elimination Tournament Format - 16 Teams

Single-Elimination Tournament Format - 16 Teams

Game Templates for Pool-Play and Round-Robin Formats

These are the most common pool sizes for tournaments. For larger pools see "League Games Templates"

3 TEAMS		
	HOME	AWAY
SINGLE DAY	A	B
	B	C
	C	A

4 TEAMS		
	HOME	AWAY
DAY 1	A	B
	C	D
	A	C
	B	D

DAY 2	D	A
	C	B

5 TEAMS		
	HOME	AWAY
DAY 1	A	B
	D	E
	C	A
	D	B
	E	C

DAY 2	B	C
	E	A
	C	D
	B	E
	A	D

League Game Templates - Best format to build schedules:

Six Teams

Week ->	1		2		3		4		5	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	B	F	D	A	F	C	C	D
Time 2	C	E	C	A	F	E	D	B	A	F
Time 3	D	F	E	D	B	C	E	A	E	B

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F

Seven Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	G	D	E	G	G	F	C	D	G	A	F	C
Time 2	C	G	F	E	D	A	B	D	A	F	C	E	B	G
Time 3	D	F	A	C	B	C	E	A	B	E	F	B	E	D
Bye	E		B		F		C		G		D		A	

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G

Eight Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	F	E	B	C	H	C	A	F	E	C	H	A
Time 2	C	G	B	H	A	D	F	G	B	E	G	A	D	E
Time 3	D	F	G	D	H	F	E	A	C	D	H	D	G	B
Time 4	E	H	C	A	G	E	D	B	G	H	F	B	F	C

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H

Nine Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	H	E	E	I	H	G	D	C	B	F	F	C	A	I	G	D
Time 2	C	I	G	F	A	D	I	F	B	E	A	G	H	A	C	G	I	B
Time 3	D	H	C	A	F	H	D	B	G	I	C	E	G	B	D	F	F	E
Time 4	E	G	I	D	B	C	E	A	F	A	I	H	E	D	B	H	H	C
Bye	F		B		G		C		H		D		I		E		A	

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I

Ten Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	G	F	E	I	J	C	J	H	G	A	D	E	H	B	C	H
Time 2	C	I	B	J	H	F	D	B	A	F	I	H	B	G	D	F	E	F
Time 3	D	H	C	A	B	C	F	I	B	E	E	C	I	J	C	G	A	J
Time 4	E	G	I	D	J	G	E	A	C	D	D	J	C	F	I	A	G	D
Time 5	F	J	H	E	A	D	G	H	I	G	F	B	H	A	J	E	B	I

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J

Twelve Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	H	G	G	I	K	F	C	D	B	F	A	H	J	K	F	E	D	H	C	J
Time 2	C	K	A	C	L	H	J	G	K	G	C	E	G	B	I	A	K	L	C	I	I	D
Time 3	D	J	B	L	D	A	H	I	H	J	D	L	F	C	B	H	A	J	E	G	H	E
Time 4	E	I	K	D	C	B	A	E	I	L	H	K	E	D	C	G	I	B	A	K	F	G
Time 5	F	H	J	E	E	K	B	D	F	A	J	I	L	J	D	F	H	C	J	B	L	A
Time 6	G	L	I	F	F	J	L	C	E	B	A	G	K	I	E	L	G	D	L	F	B	K

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J
11	K
12	L

Fourteen Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	I	H	H	J	L	G	G	M	C	E	G	B	A	I	L	N	N	F	H	E	D	J	L	C
Time 2	C	M	A	C	I	N	K	H	H	L	D	N	F	C	B	H	J	A	M	L	F	G	E	I	K	D
Time 3	D	L	N	B	D	A	J	I	I	K	M	H	E	D	C	G	I	B	A	K	M	N	F	H	J	E
Time 4	E	K	M	D	B	C	A	E	N	J	L	I	I	M	D	F	H	C	B	J	L	A	G	N	I	F
Time 5	F	J	L	E	E	M	B	D	F	A	J	K	J	L	N	E	G	D	C	I	K	B	A	M	H	G
Time 6	G	I	K	F	F	L	C	N	E	B	A	G	K	N	M	J	F	E	D	H	J	C	B	L	N	A
Time 7	H	N	J	G	G	K	M	F	D	C	B	F	H	A	L	K	K	M	E	G	I	D	C	K	M	B

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J
11	K
12	L
13	M
14	N

Sixteen Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	J	I	I	K	M	H	H	N	D	P	F	C	B	H	J	A	A	K	N	P	P	G	I	F	E	K	M	D
Time 2	C	O	A	C	J	P	L	I	I	M	O	H	E	D	C	G	I	B	B	J	L	A	O	N	H	G	F	J	L	E
Time 3	D	N	P	B	D	A	K	J	J	L	N	I	I	O	D	F	H	C	C	I	K	B	A	M	O	P	G	I	K	F
Time 4	E	M	O	D	B	C	A	E	P	K	M	J	J	N	P	E	G	D	D	H	J	C	B	L	N	A	P	H	J	G
Time 5	F	L	N	E	E	O	B	D	F	A	K	L	K	M	O	J	E	F	E	G	I	D	C	K	M	B	A	O	H	I
Time 6	G	K	M	F	F	N	C	P	E	B	A	G	L	P	N	K	K	O	P	F	H	E	D	J	L	C	B	N	P	A
Time 7	H	J	L	G	G	M	O	F	D	C	B	F	H	A	M	L	L	N	O	L	G	F	E	I	K	D	C	M	O	B
Time 8	I	P	K	H	H	L	N	G	G	O	C	E	G	B	A	I	M	P	N	M	M	O	F	H	J	E	D	L	N	C

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J
11	K
12	L
13	M
14	N
15	O
16	P

Eighteen Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	K	J	J	L	N	I	I	O	Q	H	E	D	C	G	I	B	A	K	O	R	N	Q	G	H	F	J	L	E	D	N	C	P
Time 2	C	Q	A	C	K	R	M	J	J	N	P	I	I	Q	D	F	H	C	B	J	L	A	P	O	O	Q	G	I	K	F	E	M	O	D
Time 3	D	P	R	B	D	A	L	K	K	M	O	J	J	P	E	R	G	D	C	I	K	B	A	M	P	R	H	R	J	G	F	L	N	E
Time 4	E	O	Q	D	C	B	A	E	L	R	N	K	K	O	Q	J	F	E	D	H	J	C	B	L	A	N	Q	P	I	H	G	K	M	F
Time 5	F	N	P	E	E	Q	B	D	F	A	M	L	L	N	P	K	K	Q	E	G	I	D	C	K	M	B	O	A	R	Q	H	J	L	G
Time 6	G	M	O	F	F	P	R	C	E	B	A	G	R	M	O	L	L	P	R	F	H	E	D	J	L	C	B	N	A	P	I	R	K	H
Time 7	H	L	N	G	G	O	Q	F	C	D	B	F	H	A	M	N	M	O	Q	L	G	F	E	I	K	D	C	M	B	O	Q	A	J	I
Time 8	I	K	M	H	H	N	P	G	G	Q	C	E	G	B	A	I	N	R	P	M	M	Q	F	H	J	E	D	L	N	C	P	B	A	R
Time 9	J	R	L	I	I	M	O	H	H	P	D	R	F	C	B	H	J	A	O	N	N	P	R	G	I	F	E	K	M	D	C	O	B	Q

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J
11	K
12	L
13	M
14	N
15	O
16	P
17	Q
18	R

Twenty Teams

Week->	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19	
	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away	Home	Away
Time 1	A	B	S	D	J	N	P	I	R	H	O	L	C	F	G	C	I	B	E	G	A	L	P	Q	O	S	G	I	R	T	F	L	N	E	P	D	C	R
Time 2	K	T	C	A	E	S	O	J	L	N	B	F	G	B	Q	L	N	P	D	H	K	B	M	A	Q	T	S	P	Q	S	G	K	M	F	E	O	D	Q
Time 3	C	S	B	T	A	D	H	Q	J	P	N	M	N	T	K	R	D	G	C	I	J	C	B	L	A	N	R	Q	H	I	H	J	L	G	F	N	E	P
Time 4	D	R	M	J	B	C	E	A	K	O	Q	J	L	P	J	S	H	C	F	T	I	D	C	K	B	M	O	A	J	G	S	R	K	H	G	M	O	F
Time 5	E	Q	N	I	R	F	D	B	M	T	A	G	S	I	P	M	O	T	S	L	H	E	D	J	L	C	N	B	A	P	I	T	J	I	H	L	N	G
Time 6	F	P	O	H	Q	G	N	K	G	S	E	C	H	A	F	D	L	R	P	O	G	F	E	I	K	D	C	M	B	O	A	Q	T	S	I	K	M	H
Time 7	G	O	L	K	H	P	M	L	F	A	I	R	M	O	T	E	S	K	Q	N	M	S	G	T	J	E	D	L	C	N	P	B	R	A	J	T	L	I
Time 8	H	N	P	G	K	M	G	R	Q	I	T	D	R	J	A	I	E	F	B	J	N	R	F	H	I	F	E	K	M	D	O	C	B	Q	A	S	K	J
Time 9	I	M	Q	F	T	L	S	F	B	E	P	K	D	E	O	N	J	A	R	M	O	Q	S	N	H	G	F	J	L	E	D	N	C	P	B	R	T	A
Time 10	J	L	R	E	I	O	T	C	C	D	H	S	K	Q	B	H	M	Q	A	K	T	P	R	O	P	R	T	H	K	F	E	M	D	O	Q	C	S	B

1	A
2	B
3	C
4	D
5	E
6	F
7	G
8	H
9	I
10	J
11	K
12	L
13	M
14	N
15	O
16	P
17	Q
18	R
19	S
20	T

If you want to use a free round-robin (league) schedule template, go to the following link:

http://www.saratogasoccer.org/main/schedule.html

Follow the instructions to put in the number of teams you have in your competition, and how many games they will
You can also click on the Advanced tab and have it use your team numbering system.
You cut & paste the results into your Excel spreadsheet.
The only downside is that you have to know how to parse the data in your Excel file after you paste in order to get i
But if you know how to do that, it works very well.

The only other constraint is that it will do a pool for a maximum of 26 teams.
If you have to do more than that, you will either need to do multiple flights or build multiple schedules.
For example, if you have 32 teams; break it into 2 flights of 16 teams each.