



MICHIGAN STATE YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

MSYSA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Find all information at michiganyouthsoccer.org

NOVEMBER 2025

Welcome to the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association's (MSYSA) monthly newsletter! Stay in the loop with the latest game updates, major announcements from US Youth Soccer, and highlights you won't want to miss. Whether it's big news or key recaps, we've got you covered! Stay informed. Stay inspired. Stay in the game!

LAWS OF THE GAME

As announced by U.S. Soccer and FIFA, updates have been made to the IFAB (International Football Association Board) Laws of the Game. MSYSA will officially implement these recently announced changes beginning January 1, 2026, rather than the previously anticipated date of July 1, 2025. These updates are part of ongoing efforts to ensure consistency, fairness, and clarity in the game at all levels.

To learn more about the upcoming changes, visit U.S. Soccer's website for official details. Additional minor updates to the Laws of the Game can also be found [here](#). If you have any questions or need further clarification, please don't hesitate to contact the [MSYSA State Office](#).

TOURNAMENT SANCTIONING

Tournament sanctioning for all 2026 events is currently open, and must be completed by February 1, 2026. Clubs and leagues planning to host tournaments in 2026 are encouraged to review the sanctioning process and ensure all materials are submitted before the deadline. For complete details and step-by-step guidance, please visit the [Tournament Sanctioning page](#).

WINTER STATE CUP

MSYSA is excited to share updates for the upcoming U13 and U14 Boys Winter State Cup, with adjustments made in



response to feedback from club leaders and challenges in securing indoor facilities. To better support participating teams, the team application fee has been reduced to \$395, and non-affiliated teams can now register directly for an additional \$150. Please note that the application deadline remains at 12:00 PM on Tuesday, November 25, 2025.

This single-elimination tournament will feature some of the most competitive elite-level U13 and U14 boys' teams in Michigan, with anticipated participation from 8 to 16 clubs across platforms like MLS Next, ECNL, NAL, and NLC. The first-round matches will be self-scheduled between December 13, 2025, and January 25, 2026, followed by the Semifinals in Grand Blanc and Midland on January 30, and the Finals in Wixom on February 1, 2026. We look forward to an exciting, high-level competition that showcases Michigan's top youth talent this winter.

Interested in applying for Winter State Cup? [Click here!](#)

SPRING STATE CUP & JUNIOR STATE CUP APPLICATIONS OPEN

The 2025-2026 MSYSA State Cup and Junior State Cup applications are now open, and teams across Michigan are invited to compete in one of the state's most prestigious tournament pathways. The Spring State Cup is available to U13 Girls and U13-U19 Boys teams, with preliminary matches taking place March 7 - May 3, 2026. Quarterfinal and semifinal rounds will follow on May 15 - 17, and champions will be crowned during Finals weekend, May 29 - 31, 2026. The entry fee is \$795 per team, with an additional \$150 required for non-affiliated teams. All applications must be submitted no later than 12 PM on January 28, 2026. Submit your applications here!



The Junior State Cup invites U10 - U12 MSYSA-affiliated boys and girls teams to compete in an exciting, development-focused statewide competition. Preliminary matches run concurrently with the older age groups, March 7 - May 3, 2026. Round of 16 and quarterfinals will take place May 15 - 17, followed by semifinals and finals May 29 - 31. The cost to participate is \$595 per team, and the application deadline is also 12 PM on January 28, 2026.



COACHING SYMPOSIUM

MSYSA is excited to invite coaches across Michigan to our upcoming Coaching Symposium with Chris Bentley, Director of Education for US Youth Soccer. This exclusive professional development opportunity will focus on Fundamentals of the Game, emphasizing how key concepts should be applied at the appropriate age and stage. Coaches will walk away with

practical tools tailored to their team's needs, while directors will gain a broader understanding of how foundational skills connect across age groups. The symposium will be held on Friday, December 5, 2025, from 11 AM - 1 PM at Madonna University (Kresge Hall) in Livonia. This classroom-based session offers valuable insights for coaches of all levels. Registration is \$50 per person, and the deadline to register is Monday, December 1, 2025. Register [here!](#)

We are pleased to welcome Chris Bentley as our presenter. As US Youth Soccer's Director of Education, Chris leads national initiatives in coaching education, talent identification, and grassroots programming across all 54 State Associations. With extensive coaching experience - ranging from NCAA Division I - III programs to MLS academies - and holding elite credentials such as the U.S. Soccer A License, Educator License, and Club Technical Leadership License, Chris brings a comprehensive and practical perspective to coach development. His expertise bridges the "U.S. Way" Player Development Framework with real-world application, making this a valuable learning experience you won't want to miss.

OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 25/26 SEASON



The ODP 25/26 season is officially underway, and we're thrilled to kick off winter training with an incredibly talented group of Michigan players! Following a successful alternate tryout in November, we've added 85 new players to the program, strengthening an already impressive player pool. It's exciting to see so many dedicated athletes eager to grow, compete, and represent Michigan at the next level.

In addition to the on-field excitement, our community spirit was on full display during the Gleaners Food Drive held at tryouts. Participation was fantastic, and we're eager to see if we've surpassed our summer collection record. A huge thank-you to all players, families, and staff who contributed. With training now in full swing, we're looking forward to an exciting season of development, teamwork, and continued excellence across Michigan ODP.

ITC INFORMATION & REGISTRATION

As the winter season approaches, MSYSA reminds all clubs to report any winter indoor training or scrimmages to ensure that players are covered by MSYSA's secondary medical insurance in the event of an injury. This coverage applies only to MSYSA-affiliated activities, so please make sure your club's sessions are properly reported. [Click here for more information.](#)

Looking ahead, keep an eye on your inbox in January 2026 for important details regarding MSYSA Spring 2026 registration. Additionally, now is the

perfect time to begin International Transfer Clearance (ITC) applications for players joining from outside the U.S. As the spring season approaches, processing times for ITC approvals will lengthen, which could delay player eligibility. To avoid any issues before the start of the season, we encourage clubs to apply early. [Click here for more information.](#)

2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

Mark your calendars! The 2026 MSYSA Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on Saturday, February 14, 2026, at 8:30 AM. This year's meeting will be hosted at The Henry Hotel, located at 300 Town Center Dr., Dearborn, MI 48126. The AGM is an important opportunity for member clubs and leagues to come together, discuss key initiatives, and help shape the future of youth soccer in Michigan.

A special room rate of \$194 is available for attendees who book a standard room with check-in on February 13, 2026, and check out on February 14, 2026. [Click here to book your room!](#) We look forward to seeing our members in Dearborn this February for another productive and collaborative Annual General Meeting!



MSPSP

MSPSP is gearing up for an exciting Spring 2026 season, and now is the perfect time for teams, clubs, and families to get connected! [MSPSP is now on Facebook](#), offering a new space to stay updated on league news, reminders, and trends, while also giving teams, parents, and players a place to interact directly with the league. Be sure to give the page a follow and check out the MSPSP Fall 2025 Division Champions list, now available online. Spring 2026 team registration is officially [OPEN](#) in GotSport, with clubs encouraged to begin enrolling their teams early. To assist with the registration process, MSPSP is hosting two optional Pre-Registration & FAQ Meetings via Zoom on [December 10th](#) and [January 7th](#), open to all club administrators who support team registration.

The MSPSP Spring 2026 Season runs March 6 - June 12, with the Team Registration Deadline on January 17 and the Player & Roster Deadline on January 24. The league offers five competitive tiers across both Statewide and Regional formats to help teams find the right balance of competition and travel. Boys' age groups span U13 through U18/19, while girls' divisions include U13, U14, and U15 Supplemental. Teams can expect an average of 8 matches, with division structure influencing final totals. For clubs new to MSPSP, or those interested in joining, the league welcomes over 90+ clubs from Michigan, Northern Ohio, and Ontario, representing more than 750 teams and 12,000 players each year.

Teams needing early documents for tournaments can request [Early Passcards](#) after completing the necessary registration steps. Clubs can also request free MSPSP or GLPL patches, now produced using the same material found in English Premier League jersey applications. Additionally, [MSPSP's continued partnership with Trace](#) provides every participating team access to a FREE Trace AI camera (a \$495 value), offering automatic match recording, livestreaming, AI-edited highlights, and individual player portfolios - ideal for both family memories and college recruitment. Families can subscribe individually for platform access and highlight downloads.

We're looking forward to another competitive and rewarding MSPSP season! For questions, contact Tyler Zbik at tzbik@michiganyouthsoccer.org, and visit MSPSP.org for full details and registration links.

2025 MSYSA AWARD RECIPIENTS

MSYSA is proud to announce that the 2026 MSYSA Awards Ceremony & Dinner will be held on Friday, February 13, 2026, at The Henry Hotel (300 Town Center Dr., Dearborn, MI 48126). This annual celebration recognizes individuals from across Michigan who have made outstanding contributions to youth soccer through their dedication, leadership, and passion for the game. The evening will bring together players, coaches, referees, administrators, and volunteers to honor those who make a lasting impact on the soccer community.

This year's honorees represent the best of Michigan soccer, and we congratulate them for their exceptional service and commitment. The 2026 MSYSA Award Winners include: Administrator of the Year - Kay Palmer; Boys Competitive Coach of the Year - Spencer Sandow; Girls Competitive Coach of the Year - Alyssa Harrold; Boys Recreational Coach of the Year - Mark Kimmel; Girls Recreational Coach of the Year - Andy Rusnak; Hall of Fame Recipient - Rob Ruta; TOPSoccer Coach of the Year - Ryan Pauls; TOPSoccer Buddy of the Year - Gabrielle Zimmerman; Young Female Referee of the Year - Mya Pickerel; Young Male Referee of the Year - Lucas Wallace; Volunteer of the Year - Mark Klein. Congratulations to all our award recipients for going above and beyond in growing the game and inspiring the next generation of players across Michigan!

Soccer Parenting Blog: Soccer Concussion Safety

The blog article "Concussion Headbands - Soccer Concussion Safety" by Soccer Parenting Association shines a light on an increasingly common safety tool in youth soccer: protective headbands. These headbands are being used more often to help reduce



risk, especially in scenarios involving head-to-head contact or heading the ball. While the research is still emerging, the headgear developed by Storelli Sports - with input from a bio-physicist and former professional player - performed well in a university-driven field study that found a statistically positive effect for reducing impact in girls' soccer.

The article notes that while these headbands are not a complete solution, they offer an additional layer of protection and help raise awareness around concussion risk in youth soccer. Parents and coaches are encouraged to evaluate the headband's comfort, fit, and certification as they decide whether to integrate it into their players' gear. Most importantly, the piece emphasizes that education, proper technique, strong neck stability, and concussion awareness are still the most important elements of player safety - whether or not protective headgear is used. To read more, [click here!](#)



Soccer Parenting Blog: Helping Your Child Prepare for College ID Camps

Preparing for a college ID camp can feel like a big step for both players and families, and the article from Soccer Parenting offers practical guidance to help navigate the process. It emphasizes that, above all, college coaches are looking for character, coachability, and genuine engagement just as much as talent. One key tip: encourage your child to introduce themselves to staff and current players, demonstrate curiosity, and stay active - even during downtime. These interactions can leave a lasting impression beyond what happens on the field.

As the camp approaches, setting your player up for success means helping them understand the environment, take initiative, and embrace the experience. From mingling with other participants to asking questions about culture and fit, these actions show maturity and dedication. Parents can support this by helping their athlete research the camp's program, prepare mentally for the challenge, and view the experience as part of a larger journey - not just a single event. For the full article, [click here!](#)

USYS Coaching Articles: Culture is King. Buy-in is King Kong

The article "Culture is King. Buy-In is King Kong" emphasizes that building a strong team culture is not just a side project - it's the foundation of success. It explains that culture is king, but only when everyone truly buys into it (hence, "buy-in is King Kong"). Coaches are encouraged to establish clear values, build meaningful relationships, and engage players in a shared vision - rather than relying solely on tactics or talent. When athletes feel part of something bigger than themselves, they take ownership, hold each



other accountable, and elevate the team's collective performance.

At MSYSA, we believe this approach is central to developing not just better players, but better people. When our coaches and clubs focus on creating environments where connection, commitment, and shared purpose matter, players grow technically, mentally, and socially. Whether coaching grassroots or elite teams, remembering that culture drives everything will help us build stronger clubs and a more vibrant soccer community. To read more, [click here!](#)



USYS Coaching Articles: Social Emotional Learning

In the article "Social Emotional Learning," Dr. Liam McCarthy explains how integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into coach education can profoundly impact both coaches and players. Rather than focusing solely on tactics and outcomes, the piece highlights how competencies like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are essential to effective leadership and coaching. By embracing SEL, coaches can create environments where young athletes not only improve technically but also grow personally - fostering stronger teams, healthier club cultures and athletes who are resilient, emotionally intelligent and engaged.

At MSYSA, we believe this philosophy aligns directly with our mission to develop not just players, but people. When coaches prioritize relationships, empathy, and purpose alongside the game, the benefits ripple throughout entire clubs - better communication, increased effort, fewer drop-outs, and more positive sideline cultures. As you continue your coaching journey or support your child's soccer experience, we encourage you to explore how SEL principles can uplift your team and strengthen the broader youth soccer community. To read more, [click here!](#)

MSYSA PARTICIPANT SAFETY

All MSYSA members must adhere to the [MSYSA Athlete and Participant Safety Program](#). If you become aware of any alleged violations by an MSYSA participant, you can use this [reporting form](#). Additionally, any allegation of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or retaliation must be reported to the U.S. Center for SafeSport [here](#) or by phone at (833) 587-7233 within 24 hours. Allegations of child abuse must also be reported to law enforcement.



All respective Adult Members, including Adult Athletes (18+), are required to take the SafeSport training each year and receive a background check clearance. The process for Adult Athletes is different than what is required for

Adult Team Officials. Instructions for both groups can be found on the [Risk Management Resources](#) page of our website.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Success in youth soccer isn't measured by trophies, but by smiles, effort, and growth."

-Unknown

KEEP IN TOUCH

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