



MICHIGAN STATE YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

# MSYSA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Find all information at [michiganyouthsoccer.org](http://michiganyouthsoccer.org)

## JANUARY 2026

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!

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### 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](#).

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### MSYSA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

As we celebrate 50 years of the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association, we reflect on how it all began in 1976. MSYSA was founded by a small group of dedicated clubs and volunteers who shared a simple but powerful goal: to grow the game of soccer for youth players across Michigan. In those early years, the focus was grassroots and recreational soccer, with communication relying on printed newsletters and phone trees. Opportunities were limited to a handful of local leagues and state tournaments, but what fueled the growth was a shared love for the game and a commitment to providing meaningful experiences for young players.



Fast forward to 2026, and MSYSA has grown into a nationally recognized leader in youth soccer, serving tens of thousands of players, coaches, and clubs across the state. As the organization expanded, its identity evolved to reflect that growth - while staying rooted in the values that shaped its foundation. To commemorate this milestone anniversary, MSYSA proudly introduces a special 50th Anniversary logo, featuring a gold banner that honors

our history while looking ahead to the next generation of players, leaders, and volunteers who will continue to shape the future of the game in Michigan.

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## DIRECTORS ACADEMY APPLICATIONS OPEN

Applications are now being accepted for the 2026 - 2027 MSYSA Directors Academy (DA). Both current participating clubs and potential new clubs are encouraged to apply for the upcoming season. The Directors Academy continues to play a pivotal role in supporting club leadership by providing education, collaboration, and resources that focus on long-term player and club development.

The application deadline is 12:00 Noon on March 31, so interested clubs should begin the process now. To learn more about the Directors Academy and submit an application, please visit [this link](#).

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## MICHIGAN TEAMS MOVE ON TO NL PLAYOFFS

Several Michigan teams have earned qualification to The National League Cup Playoffs following top performances in their Premier 1 divisions, highlighting the continued strength and competitiveness of youth soccer across the state. The National League Cup features four playoff events held over two weekends - June 12 - 14 or June 19 - 21 - with advancing teams earning the opportunity to compete in The National League Cup Finals, scheduled for July 7 - 9.

MSYSA proudly congratulates the following Michigan teams on their qualification: MFA GR 11G Elite Academy (U15 Girls); Michigan Rangers FC 10G Elite NL (U16 Girls); PASS FC 10G Navy (U16 Girls); MI Rangers FC 09G Elite NL (U17 Girls); and MI Rangers FC 08/07G Elite NL (U19 Girls). These teams will be contacted directly by National League staff to confirm their qualification status, with official recognition to follow on National League social media. We wish all qualified teams the best of luck as they represent Michigan on the national stage!

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## WINTER STATE CUP

With teams now officially selected, we're excited to share the elite U13 and U14 Boys clubs competing in this winter's single-elimination tournament, showcasing the very best youth talent Michigan has to offer. The field features a strong mix of top platforms, including MLS Next, ECNL, NAL, and NLC, highlighting the depth and competitiveness across the state. Competing in the U13 division are DCFC City 13B Rouge; MI Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2013; MI Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2013; Midwest United FC U13 MLS Next HG; Midwest United FC SCOR 13B Black; and Sports Plus Academy 2013 Gold. The U14 division includes: BC Fire SC 2012B Blue; DCFC City 12B Rouge; Legends FC 2012B Black E64RL; MI

Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2012; MI Jaguars MLS Next United Academy 2012; and TBAYS North Storm '12B White.

The tournament opened with self-scheduled first-round matches between December 13, 2025, and January 25, 2026, and we are now set for an exciting Semifinal round on January 30, 2026. In the U13 Boys division, Midwest United FC U13 MLS Next HG will face Michigan Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2013, while Michigan Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2013 will take on Midwest United FC SCOR 13B Black. The U14 Boys semifinals will feature Midwest United FC U14 MLS Next HG vs Michigan Jaguars MLS Next Academy 2012, and Michigan Jaguars MLS Next United Academy 2012 vs BC Fire SC 2012B Blue. The winners will advance to the Finals on February 1, 2026, in Wixom, where the Winter State Cup champion will be crowned. With so much elite talent on display, we look forward to a thrilling conclusion to this high-level winter competition.

To see results, schedules, and standings, [click here](#).

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## 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.

To submit an application for Spring State Cup, [click here](#).

To submit an application for Junior State Cup, [click here](#).

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## SPRING ODP 101 & GOALKEEPER ACADEMY, PREODP, & TRYOUT INFORMATION

Registration is officially open for several exciting ODP opportunities across Michigan! Spring ODP101 and Goalkeeper Academy (GKA) registration is now open at



10 locations statewide, providing players with additional training and development opportunities as the spring season approaches. These programs are designed to support player growth in a focused, high-quality training environment led by experienced ODP staff.

Looking ahead, PreODP registration for 2016 birth year players will open on February 1, offering younger athletes an introduction to the ODP pathway. In addition, ODP Season 2026/27 registration opens on March 1 for players born between 2010-2016. We encourage families to register early and continue developing within Michigan's premier player identification and development program.

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## **C LICENSE COURSE AVAILABLE**

MSYSA encourages coaches who are ready to take the next step in their coaching education to consider pursuing the U.S. Soccer C License, a nationally-recognized credential designed to deepen your understanding of player and team development. The C License builds on the foundational D License and focuses on coaching principles that support the development of players in the 11v11 environment (13+), helping coaches assess, organize, design, and implement training and game-day strategies rooted in the U.S. Soccer Player Development philosophy. To be eligible, candidates must be at least 18 years old, hold a U.S. Soccer D License for at least 6 months (or meet waiver criteria), and have access to a team playing in an 11v11 environment throughout the course.

The C License is delivered in a blended format, combining virtual classroom sessions, independent learning, small group discussions, and a multi-day in-person session with a licensed U.S. Soccer Educator. Participants engaged in around 80+ integrated hours of learning, including assessments in areas such as training session design, team performance analysis, and coaching game environments. This course is ideal for coaches who are serious about elevating their impact on player development and their club's technical standards. Completing the U.S. Soccer coaching education structure and supports long-term growth in their coaching careers. To learn more, [click here](#).

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## **MSYSA SPRING 2026 REGISTRATION REMINDER**

As we prepare for the upcoming Spring 2026 season, MSYSA would like to remind all clubs and teams of the key registration deadlines. All Spring 2026 registration data must be finalized in GotSport by April 22, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

Please ensure that all players, coaches, team officials, and rosters are fully updated and accurate before the deadline to avoid any eligibility issues as the season begins.

Additionally, the final registration payment for Spring 2026 is due to MSYSA by May 25, 2026. Clubs are encouraged to plan ahead and complete payments on time to ensure a smooth start to competition. We appreciate your attention to those important dates and look forward to another successful spring season across Michigan!

Please keep an eye out for Spring Registration information emails later this month.

If your club has players born outside of the US or who have played soccer outside of the US, now is the time to start the International Transfer Clearance (ITC) process if the player does not yet have ITC approval. It can take up to 30 days to get approval from FIFA/US Soccer, so early application is key for eligibility. See the [MSYSA ITC page](#) or reach out to [ITC@michiganyouthsoccer.org](mailto:ITC@michiganyouthsoccer.org) if you have questions.

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## 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.

We look forward to seeing our members in Dearborn this February for another productive and collaborative Annual General Meeting!

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## MSPSP

As we prepare for the MSPSP Spring Season, we want to share several important dates and reminders to help clubs and teams stay on track. Player contracts and team rosters are due Saturday, January 24, which is a critical deadline for all participating teams. Shortly after, Phase 1 late player additions will open from January 26 through March 5 at a cost of \$25 per player, followed by Phase 2 late additions beginning March 6 at \$50 per player. Pre-divisions will be released on Thursday, January 29 at 3:00 PM, and the MSPSP Divisioning Meeting will take place Tuesday, February 3 at noon via Zoom.

The scheduling window will run from February 6 through February 22, with schedule verification scheduled for February 23-25. Team documents, including official rosters and passcards, will be available on March 4, ahead of the MSPSP Spring Season kickoff on March 6. If your team needs documents prior to March 4, Early Passcards may be requested for \$50 per team by completing the required form. Teams are reminded that player additions are permitted throughout the season but are subject to the applicable late-addition fees.

Please note two important State Cup weekends during the spring season. Quarterfinals and Semifinals will take place May 15-17, and Finals will be held May 29-31. GLPL and Premier-level teams are strongly encouraged not to schedule league matches during the May 15-17 weekend, as many referees will be assigned to State Cup matches. The MSPSP Spring Season will conclude on June 12.

To help teams prepare, two optional Season Kickoff Meetings will be offered for team staff, both covering the same information. The first meeting will be held March 4 at 6:00 PM via Zoom, with a second option on March 18 at 6:00 PM via Zoom. Additional details and meeting links will be shared closer to the start of the season. We appreciate everyone's cooperation and look forward to another successful and competitive MSPSP spring season.

If you have any questions, please email [Tyler Zbik](#), or visit the [MSPSP website](#).

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## **ODP GIRL 2012, 2013, 2014, & 2015 STATE TEAMS ANNOUNCED & FWC RECAP**

We're excited to announce that Michigan ODP State Teams for the 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 girls age groups have been selected, with 113 players earning spots on their respective state teams. This milestone reflects the continued growth, commitment, and high level of talent within Michigan's Olympic Development Program, and we congratulate all players who have been selected for their hard work and dedication.

The selection process is not yet complete, as boys' state teams will be announced on January 31, 2026, followed by the final two girls' state teams on February 1, 2026. Once all teams are finalized, be sure to check MSYSA social media channels for a post recognizing and announcing all selected players.

We look forward to celebrating the full group of athletes who will represent Michigan at the state level this season.

Congratulations to our 2024/25 Michigan ODP Boys State Team (2008/09) - with valuable contributions from several 2010 boys playing up - on winning their division championship at the Far West Championships in Arizona. This outstanding achievement highlights the depth of talent, resilience, and teamwork displayed by our players as they competed against top programs from across the region.

This year also marked our most successful trip to the Far West Championships, with five Michigan ODP teams advancing to the semifinals. The performances across all age groups showcased the strength of Michigan soccer and the positive impact of the ODP pathway. We are incredibly proud of our players, coaches, and staff for representing the state with excellence both on and off the field.

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## **ODP ON TOUR: PARIS, FRANCE**

Michigan ODP is heading overseas! ODP Season 2024/25 players will depart for an international trip to France at the end of March, embarking on an exciting eight-day tour based in Paris. This once-in-a-lifetime experience will provide players with the opportunity to compete in international matches, train in a professional environment, and immerse themselves in the global game.



During the trip, players will face international competition and receive coaching from professional club staff, offering valuable exposure to different playing styles, training methods, and soccer cultures. This international tour represents an incredible developmental opportunity both on and off the field, reinforcing ODP's mission to challenge players at the highest levels while creating unforgettable experiences that extend beyond the pitch.

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## **ODP COACHES TAKE ON NETHERLANDS**

Michigan ODP continues to invest in coach development on the international stage. ODP Goalkeeper Coach Colin Lyman and ODP 2013 Girls Head Coach Zach Shuk will travel to the Netherlands in March for an advanced coaching education experience. This opportunity allows both coaches to learn directly from top European training environments, gaining insight into elite player development, methodology, and best practices.

By participating in international coaching education, Colin and Zach will bring valuable knowledge and fresh perspectives back to Michigan, directly benefiting ODP players across the state. These experiences reflect MSYSA's commitment to developing not only talented players, but also highly educated coaches who can positively impact the long-term growth of the game.

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## **Soccer Parenting Blog: What can I do to help my child improve their shooting?**

Helping young players improve their shooting skills doesn't have to be complicated - and the Soccer Parenting blog breaks down simple, yet effective, ways parents and coaches can support their development. The article explains that shooting success stems from a combination of proper technique, confident decision-making, and extensive, thoughtful repetition. Rather than focusing solely on power, players should be encouraged to work on approach angle, plant foot placement, striking with the laces, and following through toward the target. Practicing these fundamentals in fun, game-like situations not only builds mechanics but also helps players feel more comfortable and instinctive when opportunities to shoot arise in real matches.

Importantly, the blog reminds adults that encouragement and patience are key. Young players need time to refine their technique while learning when to shoot and when to create space or pass. Parents and coaches can create supportive practice moments by offering clear, positive feedback and by integrating shooting drills into family play or team sessions. Ultimately, improvements in shooting come not just from physical repetition but from confidence and enjoyment in taking chances - and that makes the learning process more rewarding for every player. To read more, [click here!](#)

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## **Soccer Parenting Blog: How to Balance School & Soccer Commitments**



Balancing school and soccer commitments can be a challenge for student-athletes and their families, but the Soccer Parenting blog offers thoughtful strategies to help players thrive both academically and athletically. The article emphasizes the importance of planning - setting routines for homework, training, and rest - so that school responsibilities don't get overshadowed by practice schedules or travel.

Encouraging players to use tools like calendars, checklists, and quiet study times helps them stay organized and manage their time effectively, whether it's juggling exams one week or games the next.

The article also highlights the value of communication among players, parents, and coaches. When expectations are clear, and adults work together to support the athlete's priorities, young players learn essential life skills like time management, responsibility, and self-advocacy. Understanding that school performance and personal well-being are as important as performance on the field can help families make decisions that benefit the whole child. By fostering balance - not pressure - parents and coaches can ensure that soccer remains a source of joy, growth, and confidence throughout the academic year. To read more, [click here!](#)

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## USYS Coaching Articles: Parental Stress

The pressures of youth sports can sometimes create stress for parents, and the U.S. Soccer article "Parental Stress" sheds light on how healthy communication and boundaries can make a big difference in the overall experience. The piece emphasizes that while parents naturally want the best for their children, anxiety around performance, playing time, and competition can inadvertently lead to tension with coaches and players alike. Establishing clear expectations early - such as through pre-season meetings or agreed-upon channels for communication - helps reduce misunderstandings and builds a foundation of mutual respect between coaches and families.



The article also highlights strategies that help parents support their players while staying positive on the sidelines, such as adopting the "24-hour rule" before addressing concerns and focusing comments on effort and enjoyment rather than outcomes. When parents and coaches work together with empathy and understanding, it creates a more encouraging and empowering environment for athletes. Encouraging these kinds of positive behaviors not only minimizes stress but also nurtures a culture where players can learn, grow, and thrive both on and off the field. To read more, [click here!](#)

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## USYS Coaching Articles: Generating Feedback to Support Coach Learning

The article highlights the importance of thoughtful feedback in helping coaches grow and improve their practice. Rather than simple praise or criticism, effective feedback is specific, actionable, and centered on observable



behaviors that coaches can adjust over time. By focusing on clear examples - such as how a coach organizes training or communicates with players - feedback becomes a tool for real development rather than a source of frustration. The article also emphasizes that feedback isn't just about pointing out what didn't go well; it should recognize strengths and build on what is already working, creating a balanced and encouraging learning environment.

For clubs, mentors, and coach developers, fostering a culture of constructive feedback can elevate the entire coaching community. The article encourages regular, structured conversations between coaches and trusted peers or mentors, where questions like "What worked?" and "What might you try differently next time?" guide reflection and improvement. By making feedback a natural part of professional growth rather than something reserved for evaluation moments, coaches feel supported, engaged, and better equipped to lead their players. To read more, [click here!](#)

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## 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.

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The secret is to believe in your dreams; in your potential that you can be like your star, keep searching, keep believing."

-Cristiano Ronaldo

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## KEEP IN TOUCH

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Michigan State Youth Soccer Association, Inc. | 9401 General Drive Suite 120 | Plymouth, MI 48170 US

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