



MICHIGAN STATE YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

# MSYSA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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

## APRIL 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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### SOCCER FORWARD

As part of U.S. Soccer's Soccer Forward Initiative, Soccer Forward Fests are bringing together communities together across the country to celebrate the game in meaningful and inclusive ways. These events are designed to highlight soccer's impact beyond the field, serving as community-driven celebrations that can take many forms - from youth tournaments and field days to block parties and cultural festivals. Open to schools, clubs, organizations, and local leaders, Soccer Forward Fests aim to unite people through a shared love of the game while expanding access and participation nationwide.

Kicking off 100 days ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and continuing through the final whistle, these events are part of a larger effort to "Keep Score of What Matters" by focusing on community impact, connection, and growth. Soccer Forward Fests provide an opportunity for communities to tell their own soccer story while contributing to a nationwide celebration of the sport. By empowering local organizations to host events and engage players of all ages, this initiative aims to leave a lasting legacy that strengthens the game and inspires the next generation. To learn more, [click here!](#)

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### ODP NATIONAL PLAYER EXPERIENCE TRIPS OF LIFETIME

Several of Michigan's top USYS ODP players recently returned from unforgettable national team experiences, representing the state at the highest level. Ellie Hickox (2010 girls), Avery Gunn (2011 girls), and Vivian Christianson (2011 girls) traveled to Lisbon, Portugal, where they trained and competed against international competition, while Haidar Alemara (2012 boys) and Emma Kulpa (2013 girls) participated in national team events in Florida.



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Across the board, each player spoke highly of their experience, sharing how meaningful the opportunity was to train, compete, and connect with top players from around the country and world - an experience they won't forget.

As we celebrate their return, we also look ahead to the next international opportunity, as Waleed Alhiyafi (2009 boys) prepares to travel later this month with his national team to Valencia, Spain. MSYSA is incredibly proud of all of these players for representing Michigan on the national and international stage, and we look forward to seeing their continued growth as they build on these incredible experiences!

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## **U.S. SOCCER TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP COURSE**

MSYSA is excited to highlight a new coaching education opportunity through U.S. Soccer that continues to support the growth and development of coaches at all levels. This course is designed to help coaches better understand how to create effective, player-centered environments by focusing on planning, delivering, and reflecting on training sessions and match experiences. As part of U.S. Soccer's broader coaching education pathway, the course emphasizes developing the individual player while also strengthening the overall team environment.

Through a blend of online learning, collaboration, and practical application, participants will gain valuable tools to enhance their coaching approach and positively impact their players. Coaches will explore key concepts such as session design, communication, and long-term player development, all within a supportive learning environment. Whether you're continuing your licensing pathway or looking to grow your knowledge of the game, this course offers a great opportunity to further your education and make a meaningful impact on the field. To learn more, [click here!](#)

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## **HALFWAY THROUGH SPRING SC & JUNIOR SC ACTION**

The 2026 Spring State Cup and Junior State Cup are officially at the midway point of preliminary play, and the competition across Michigan has been nothing short of exciting. With teams battling through the early rounds, we've already seen high-level matchups, standout performances, and plenty of drama as clubs push to secure their place in the next stage of the tournament.

As we approach the conclusion of preliminary matches, all eyes now turn to the first championship weekend in Saginaw this May, where teams will compete in the Quarterfinals and Semifinals. With so much talent still in contention, we can't wait to see which teams rise to the occasion and earn their spot in the final rounds. The road to a State Cup title is heating up, and the best is still to come!

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## **PREODP REGISTRATION**

Registration is still open for the 2026 PreODP Program, scheduled for June 20, 2026, at Independence Park in Canton, MI. This introductory ODP experience is designed exclusively for 2016 birth-year players (1/1/2016 - 12/31/2016) and provides a great opportunity for young athletes to begin their journey in the Olympic Development Program pathway. Players will participate in two required training sessions - 10-11:30 AM and 12:30 - 2 PM - led by experienced ODP coaching staff in a fun, development-focused environment.



The cost to participate is \$130, which includes a Nike drawstring satchel, Nike PreODP shirt, and an added benefit of 10% off registration for any 2016 player who signs up for the July ODP State Team tryouts. PreODP is a great way for players to gain exposure to the ODP training environment while building skills and confidence alongside peers from across the state. Be sure to register early and take advantage of this exciting opportunity. To register, [click here!](#)

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## ODP101 & GOALKEEPER ACADEMY KICK OFF

The first sessions of ODP 101 and Goalkeeper Academy are officially underway across Michigan, marking an exciting start to the spring training season. These programs provide additional development opportunities for players looking to challenge themselves in a high-quality training environment alongside other motivated athletes. With sessions taking place at multiple locations statewide, players are already benefiting from structured training focused on improving their technical, tactical, physical, and mental aspects of the game.

The Goalkeeper Academy continues to offer specialized training for goalkeepers, helping them refine position-specific skills in a professional setting, while ODP101 gives field players the chance to grow and be evaluated within the ODP pathway. With strong participation and energy at the opening sessions, we're excited to see players continue to develop over the coming weeks and take advantage of this valuable training experience!



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## ODP TRYOUTS INFORMATION

Registration is now open for the 2026-27 season of the ODP Program in Michigan. The program is open to players born between 2010 and 2016, giving athletes across the state the opportunity to participate in one of the country's premier player identification and development pathways. Early-bird registration opens March 1, with tiered pricing throughout the registration period.

Tryouts for the upcoming ODP cycle will take place July 24-26, 2026, at Independence Park, where players will participate in multiple evaluation sessions with experienced ODP coaches. Athletes are encouraged to attend all assigned sessions for their age group to allow staff the best opportunity to evaluate their performance and potential. Players who are unable to attend

their scheduled sessions may request placement in an alternate tryout session, which is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The ODP pathway provides players with high-level training and opportunities to be identified for state, regional, and national programs while continuing to play for their club teams. Participation in ODP does not prevent players from competing in other U.S. Soccer-affiliated programs, and families are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to further develop their skills and compete alongside some of Michigan's top players. To learn more, click [here!](#)

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## NATIONAL 1 LEAGUE

MSYSA is excited to announce the launch of the National 1 League, a new top-tier competition set to begin in the 2026-2027 season. As the Midwest District 5 operator - serving Michigan and Northern Indiana - MSYSA will play a key role in delivering this professionally managed, high-quality league experience. National 1 League (formerly referred to as "NewComp") brings together the USYS National League and the US Club Soccer National Premier League under one unified platform, creating an enhanced pathway for elite teams to compete at the highest level. Inaugural postseason play is scheduled for summer 2027, marking an exciting new chapter for youth soccer competition in our region.

Applications for Fall 2026 will be opening soon, and clubs are encouraged to prepare by highlighting their competitive history, including league performance, tournament results, and participation in events such as State Cup, Nationals, and National League competitions. MSYSA will use this information to evaluate teams for inclusion in this highly competitive platform. For questions or to express interest, clubs can connect with MSYSA staff to stay informed on updates. We look forward to the opportunities in the National 1 League will bring as we continue to elevate the standard of youth soccer in Michigan and beyond. 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 these important dates and look forward to another successful spring season across Michigan!

For teams participating in the Canton Cup, please note the following additional deadlines: Tournament Only Teams must have all information submitted to [Elizabeth Satterley](#) by Wednesday, May 13, 2026. Guest player passcard

requests must have all materials submitted to [Elizabeth Satterley](#) by Tuesday, May 19, 2026.

Please keep an eye out for more Spring Registration emails over the coming weeks.

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](#) if you have questions.

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## MSPSP

The MSPSP Spring Season is underway, and teams can stay up to date with the latest schedules and standings through the GotSport event page. Clubs are reminded that player additions must be completed using the official Late Player Addition form, and feedback on match officials can be submitted through the Referee Feedback form. These tools help ensure the season runs smoothly and that all teams have the most accurate and up-to-date information as the competition continues across the state.

Registration is now open for the MSPSP Summer League, offering teams a flexible, club-friendly way to stay active during the offseason. Designed as an official “club friendly” format, the league allows teams to compete against local opponents while focusing on conditioning, development, sportsmanship, and preparation for the fall season—without the pressure of standings or division titles. Open to Elite, Premier, and Select players, the league runs from June 15 through July 31 and costs \$250 per team. Teams can take advantage of early bird savings of \$50 by enrolling before May 1, with final registration due by May 22. Please note that a \$200 withdrawal penalty will apply after the deadline. Rosters must be submitted by June 2. For more information, join the Summer League Info Meeting on April 23 at 6 PM via [Zoom](#).

MSPSP continues to expand opportunities for clubs through partnerships with organizations such as SoccerParenting, which provides educational resources designed to empower parents, coaches, and club leaders to create a more positive youth soccer environment. MSYSA member clubs are invited to attend an upcoming webinar focused on best practices for parents engagement and building stronger club culture. In addition, through the MSPSP x Trace partnership, teams can receive a free AI camera to record matches, create highlights, and livestream games. This programs allows players and families to access advanced video tools while helping clubs enhance development, exposure, and communication throughout the season. To learn more, visit the [website](#)!

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## ODP VENDORS AT 2026 TRYOUTS

We're looking forward to an exciting time at the 2026 ODP Tryouts this July, and we're thrilled to welcome a great lineup of local food vendors to enhance

the experience for players and families. Whether you're fueling up before a session or relaxing between sessions, there will be plenty of delicious options available throughout the event. Bearclaw Coffee will be on site daily from 7:30 - 11:30 AM to help kickstart your mornings, while Playa Bowls will be serving açai bowls, smoothies, and more every day from 8 AM - 6 PM. In addition, Pryde Athletics will be back again this year with their popular "Recovery Lounge," available all day, every day, offering stretching sessions, recovery boots, and other services to help players stay fresh and perform at their best.

In addition, we'll have a rotating schedule of food trucks bringing even more variety each day. Stello's Burgers will be available on July 24 from 11:30 AM - 5:30 AM, followed by Slows BBQ on July 25 from 11 AM - 5 PM, and Tacos Hernandez on July 26 from 11:30 - 5:30 PM. With so many great options both on and off the field, be sure to stop by the vendors each day and enjoy everything the tryout experience has to offer!

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## ODP ON TOUR: PARIS, FRANCE RECAP



The #ODPonTour trip to France was an unforgettable experience for MSYSA players and families, blending high-level soccer with world-class sightseeing.

Throughout the week, participants explored some of Paris's most iconic landmarks, including visits to the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Champs-Élysées, along with time spent at the historic Château de Versailles and the Notre Dame Cathedral. Players and families also enjoyed a scenic boat tour along the River Seine, offering breathtaking views of the city's most famous attractions. From walking through Montmartre to experiencing the energy of professional soccer in France, the trip provided a truly immersive cultural experience both on and off the field.

On the soccer side, players had the unique opportunity to train with a professional coach connected to the French Football Federation, gaining valuable insight into the European style of play. The teams competed in multiple friendly matches against local French clubs, creating memorable moments of competition and connection while experiencing the global game firsthand. Families also had the chance to attend professional matches, with some groups enjoying a Red Star FC match while others experienced the atmosphere of a Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) game. These experiences, combined with high-level training and international competition, made the French tour a truly special opportunity that will leave a lasting impact on everyone involved. To learn more about our trip, [click here!](#)

Are you an ODP player interested in the 2027 trip? [Fill out this interest form!](#)

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## Soccer Parenting Blog: I Was VOLUNTOLD to Coach...Now What?

A recent blog from the Soccer Parenting, "I Was Voluntold to Coach...Now What?", highlights the reality many parents face when unexpectedly stepping

into a coaching role. The article shares insights from a Q&A discussion on helping new coaches navigate common challenges, including building player confidence, managing diverse personalities, and maintaining a positive team environment. Rather than focusing solely on tactics, the conversation emphasizes the importance of creating meaningful connections with players and keeping the experience centered on enjoyment and development.



The key takeaway is that coaching - especially at the youth level - is about more than just teaching the game. It's about fostering a love for soccer, supporting each player's individual journey, and working collaboratively with parents and other coaches. Whether you're an experienced coach or stepping into the role for the first time, the article reinforces that creating a positive, inclusive, and encouraging environment can have a lasting impact on young athletes both on and off the field. To read more, [click here!](#)



### **Soccer Parenting Blog: Navigating the Change to School Year Registration**

A recent article from Soccer Parenting, "Navigating the Change to School Year Registration", provides helpful insight for families adjusting to upcoming changes in youth soccer age group structures. The discussion, led by JT Dorsey and Elias Jorge, addresses common concerns from parents, including how to handle team transitions, support coaches, and keep players motivated during periods of change. The conversation emphasizes that while adjustments can feel uncertain, they also present opportunities for players to grow, build confidence, and stay connected to the joy of the game.

The article encourages parents to focus on their child's overall experience rather than just placement, highlighting the importance of communication, advocacy, and understanding each player's unique needs. Whether it's helping quieter players find their voice, supporting those with learning differences, or reinforcing positive relationships with coaches, the key takeaway is to remain player-centered throughout the transition. By approaching these changes with patience and a development-first mindset, families can help ensure a positive and supportive soccer experience both on and off the field. To read more, [click here!](#)

### **USYS News Articles: Blazing a Train: Emily Spreeman's Impact on Deaf Soccer**

A recent feature from USYS highlights the incredible journey of Emily Spreeman, a trailblazer in deaf soccer whose impact reaches far beyond the field. A two-time USYS National Champion, Spreeman's success at the youth level helped build the foundation for an outstanding career. She later became a key figure on the U.S. Women's Deaf



National Team, where she has consistently excelled, earning honors such as Golden Boot awards and helping lead her team to multiple international titles.

Spreeman's story is not just about achievements, but about representation, resilience, and inclusion. She has helped elevate awareness and opportunities within deaf soccer, showing how the game can connect players in unique and powerful ways through communication, teamwork, and shared experience. Her journey serves as an inspiring reminder that soccer is for everyone and that the lessons learned through the game can create a lasting impact both on and off the field. To read more, [click here!](#)

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## USYS News Articles: From National League to NCAA Success: Donovan Phillip's Journey

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A recent article from USYS highlights an exciting opportunity for four standout referees who have been selected to participate in an international development trip this spring. Audrey Atwell (Virginia), Jade Mallea (Florida), Koen Ross (Washington), and Shawn Westerfield (Ohio) were chosen in recognition of their dedication, performance, and contributions to the game at the youth level. Their selection reflects their continued growth and the strength of USYS referee development programs.

During the trip, the referees will travel to Germany, France, and Switzerland, where they will gain valuable international experience by officiating matches, attending a Bundesliga game, and visiting key soccer institutions such as the German Football Association headquarters and FIFA's museum and headquarters. The experience is designed to support their growth both on and off the field, providing exposure to the global game and helping prepare them for higher levels of officiating. This opportunity continues to highlight the important role referees play in the sport and the pathways available for their development within USYS. 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

"Good soccer players need not be titans sculpted by Michelangelo. In soccer, your ability is much more important than shape."

-Arrigo Sacchi

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## KEEP IN TOUCH

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