

OCTOBER 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!

STAY CONNECTED WITH THE NEW MSYSA APP

The Michigan State Youth Soccer Association is excited to announce that the official MSYSA app is now live and available to download. Designed to keep the Michigan soccer community connected, the app provides quick and convenient access to schedules, news, event information, resources, updates, and more - all from your phone, tablet, or computer. Whether you're looking for the latest tournament information, registration updates, or important announcements, the MSYSA app puts everything you need in one place.

We encourage all players, coaches, parents, referees, administrators, and supporters to download the app and take advantage of this new resource. With easy access to information across all MSYSA programs and events, staying up to date with Michigan soccer has never been easier. Download the app today through the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, or access the web version and stay connected with everything happening across the state!

YOUTH SOCCER COACHING RESOURCES FOR EVERY PLAYER

As another fall soccer season gets underway, hundreds of thousands of players across the country are stepping onto the field, each bringing their own experiences, abilities, goals, and reasons for playing. From a player's very first tough in their local community to the highest levels of competition, every athlete's journey is unique. That is why creating an environment that recognizes and supports the individual is such an important part of player development. When coaches take the time to understand where players are in their journey, what motivates them, and what they need to continue growing, they can create more meaningful experiences both on and off the field.

Coaches are at the heart of that experience. They often spend the most time guiding players through challenges, celebrating their successes, and helping them develop a lifelong connection to the game. Putting the player at the center means looking beyond simply technical and tactical performance and recognizing that every player develops differently. A positive, engaging environment can help players build confidence, develop decision-making skills, take ownership of their learning, and continue finding their own path forward.

As part of The U.S. Way, U.S. Soccer is sharing new guidance and best practices to help coaches better support individual player development at every age, stage, and level of the game. The available resources are designed to enhance the great work coaches are already doing by providing tools and ideas for understanding players, using the game as a vehicle for development, and creating positive learning environments. There is no single path to becoming a better player, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to coaching. By continuing to learn, reflect, and put players first, coaches can help create better experiences today while shaping the future of the game tomorrow.

WINTER ODP101 & GOALKEEPER ACADEMY REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

Registration for the Winter ODP101/GKA program opened on September 9! This training opportunity gives players the chance to keep developing their skills through focused ODP training during the winter months. Sessions will be held January 16 and 17 from 12 - 2 PM at Let's Play Soccer! in Portage, along with an additional location at the Capital Sports Plex in Lansing on January 9 and 10 from 12 - 2 PM. Players should plan to attend all scheduled sessions.

The $155 registration fee includes all training sessions and a Nike ODP training jersey. Registration will remain open through January 1. ODP101 is available to players born in 2014-2018, while GKA is open to players born in 2011-2017.

As an added opportunity for participants, one boy and one girl player will be selected from each location randomly to receive free ODP101/GKA registration for Spring 2027. Don't miss the opportunity to train with ODP this winter and continue their development into the spring season! To register, click here.

Have any questions? Email the State Office.

FALL STATE CUP CHAMPIONS TO BE CROWNED

The road to the Fall State Cup championship comes down to one final weekend! After weeks of competition and countless hours on the field, 20 teams have earned their place in the championship matches and will compete for a State Cup title. The final games will take place this weekend at Legacy Sports Center in Brighton, bringing together players, coaches, families, and supporters from across the state for an exciting weekend of championship soccer.

This year's finalists represent clubs from communities throughout Michigan and include clubs like Nationals Genesee, Nationals Capital Area, Midland Fusion, West Michigan Premier, TKO Premier SC, ACGR Shore, Athletic SC, Portage SC, PASS FC, ACGR Coast, Nationals Union, Michigan Rangers FC, Plymouth Reign, Royal Oak FC, Nationals Tricounty, and TBAYS North Storm. Each team has battled through the Fall State Cup competition to reach this stage, and now just one final game stands between them and a championship. With each team bringing its own strengths, determination, and chemistry to the field, the championship matches are sure to deliver an exciting finish to the season.

As the final whistle approaches, we want to wish all of our finalists the very best of luck! Whether this is a team's first State Cup final or another opportunity to compete for a championship, reaching this stage is an accomplishment worth celebrating. We encourage families, teammates, friends, and soccer fans from across Michigan to come out to the Legacy Sports Center in Brighton and support these teams as they compete for the title. Congratulations to all of our Fall State Cup Finalists, and best of luck this weekend as champions are crowned!

ODP WINTER TRAINING POOL & MAKE-UP TRYOUT INFO

For players who were unable to attend the July tryouts or are interested in the event, MSYSA is now accepting make-up tryout registrations for the 2026/27 ODP season through November 1. The make-up tryout schedule, location, and session information will be finalized and shared with registered participants during the first or second week of September, providing another opportunity for players to be evaluated and enter the ODP pathway. To register a girl player, click here. To register a boy player, click here.

The makeup tryout date is November 21. The first weekend of ODP Winter Pool Training is November 21 and 22. During these days, Gleaners Food Drive will be accepting non-perishable food items for Michigan families in need this holiday season! If you have questions, please email stateoffice@michiganyouthsoccer.org.

NATIONAL 1 LEAGUE

The inaugural 2026-27 Midwest District 5 National 1 season is continuing to build momentum as the fall season begins to wind down. Since matches kicked off on August 8, clubs from across the district have competed in a highly competitive schedule, with the standings tightening as teams work toward the top. With the final weeks of fall play approaching, every match represents an important opportunity for teams to earn points and strengthen their position in the race for the ECNL Conference League Playoffs.

Looking ahead to the spring season, applications for National 1 will open on November 16. Boys and Girls U13-U14 teams, along with Boys U15-U19

teams, are encouraged to apply. Clubs currently competing in GLPL, ECNL RL, NAL, DPL, and other top competitive leagues are especially encouraged to consider National 1 as an opportunity to compete in a high-level, team-based environment. The registration fee is $1,200 per team, due at the time of application, and the deadline to apply is November 22. Clubs interested in participating are encouraged to prepare their applications ahead of the deadline. To learn more, click here!

MSYSA 26/27 SEASONAL YEAR

Fall registration data was required to be submitted in GotSport by September 23, 2026, with registration payments due by October 15, 2026. MSYSA events will officially close to Fall registrations on October 29, 2026, and Winter/Spring registration events will open on November 2, 2026. Clubs are encouraged to plan ahead and complete all necessary registration requirements before each deadline.

MSPSP

The MSPSP Fall Season is currently underway and will continue through November 16. As teams move through the season, there are several important reminders and updates for clubs and teams to keep in mind.

Teams that face a league opponent in a State Cup or tournament match may have the option to use that tournament result as their league result, helping reduce travel and scheduling commitments. Both teams must agree to use the result, and teams interested in this option must contact MSPSP directly for approval.

MSPSP is also currently in Phase 2 of Late Player Additions. Each late player added to a team roster requires a $50 fee. Teams can submit the required fee through the MSPSP late-addition form.

At the conclusion of the season, division champions will receive Division Champion T-shirts. Champion teams may order up to 25 shirts for their players and staff, with shirts available for GLPL, Premier, and Classic division champions. Supplemental teams are not eligible for division rewards. For split GLPL and Premier divisions, champion recognition will be determined based on the division format and standings.

Teams should also keep promotion and relegation in mind as the fall season continues. Teams finishing near the top of their division are generally eligible for promotion, while teams finishing toward the bottom of the standings may be relegated to a lower division.

Looking ahead, MSPSP Spring Registration will open in early November. The registration fee is $475 per team, with a registration deadline of January 9. Teams should plan ahead and watch for additional registration information as the spring season approaches. For any questions, please email Tyler Zbik.

Soccer Parenting Blog: Fitness vs. Game Fitness in Soccer: What's the Difference?

Physical fitness is an important part of soccer, but being physically fit does not always mean a player is prepared for the demands of a game. In Soccer Parenting's blog, coaches are encouraged to consider the difference between general fitness and "game fitness" - the ability to repeatedly sprint, slow down, change direction, recover, and make decisions throughout a match. While activities like running can help build endurance, soccer requires players to constantly adjust their pace and movement based on what is happening around them.

The article highlights the value of making fitness training more specific to the game itself. Small-sided games and other game-like activities can challenge players physically while also developing their technical skills, decision-making, and ability to respond to pressure. Rather than focusing solely on how far or how fast a player can run, coaches can create training environments that replicate the unpredictable, stop-and-start nature of a soccer match.

Ultimately, the goal of fitness training should be to help players perform at their best throughout an entire game. When conditioning is incorporated into engaging, soccer-specific activities, players can develop the physical tools they need while continuing to work on the technical and tactical parts of their game. For coaches, the message is simple: fitness should not exist separately from soccer. The more training reflects the demands of the game, the better prepared players will be when it is time to compete. To read more, click here!

Soccer Parenting Blog: New Team? Here's How Parents Can Help Build a Positive Team Community

Creating a positive team culture is an important part of the youth soccer experience, but it does not happen by accident. In Soccer Parenting's blog, coaches, parents, and players are encouraged to recognize that everyone plays a role in shaping the environment of a team. A strong team culture is built around shared expectations, positive communication, respect, and a focus on helping players feel supported and valued both on and off the field.

The article highlights the importance of establishing clear team values and creating an environment where players feel comfortable making mistakes, learning, and supporting one another. Coaches can help set the tone by modeling positive behavior, communicating expectations, and reinforcing the qualities they want to see from their players. Parents also have an important role to play by supporting the team as a whole, encouraging their children, and contributing to a positive sideline and team environment.

Ultimately, a positive team culture is about creating an experience where players can develop as athletes while also building confidence, relationships,

and a lasting love for the game. When coaches, parents, and players work together toward a shared vision, the benefits extend beyond wins and losses. For everyone involved in youth soccer, the message is simple: the environment we create matters. By prioritizing connection, respect, encouragement, and shared values, teams can create a culture where every player has the opportunity to thrive. 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

"Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I assure you, it's much more serious than that."

- Bill Shankly

KEEP IN TOUCH

For the latest updates on MSYSA, follow us on social media!

TWITTER/X

INSTAGRAM

FACEBOOK

TIKTOK

MSYSA APP

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

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

Constant Contact

Try email & social marketing for free!