



SEPTEMBER 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 touch 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.

LAWS OF THE GAME EDUCATION SESSION COMING SOON

Understanding the Laws of the Game is an important part of creating a consistent, informed, and positive environment for players, coaches, and officials. MSYSA will be hosting an upcoming Laws of the Game education session for coaches across Michigan, providing an opportunity to review the rules and better understand how they apply to youth soccer. MSYSA competitions follow the FIFA Laws of the Game, along with applicable US Soccer and MSYSA modifications.

More information, including session details and registration, will be shared soon. Stay tuned for additional information and join us as we continue to educate and support coaches across Michigan!

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 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 & DIRECTORS ACADEMY SEASON ONGOING

The Fall season is in full swing across Michigan, with both the Fall State Cup and Fall Directors Academy continuing to bring meaningful competition and development opportunities to players across the state. The Fall State Cup has reached the halfway point of its preliminary round, with matches continuing through September 20 before teams advance to the quarterfinals and semifinals on October 3-4 at the Saginaw Soccer Complex. The Championship weekend will follow October 17-18 at Legacy Sports Center in Brighton.

Meanwhile, the Fall Directors Academy season continues through November 9, providing U10-U12 players with a competitive environment focused on player and team development. With plenty of soccer still ahead, we're excited to see teams continue to compete, grow, and make the most of the fall season!



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 officially underway, with the first matches kicking off on August 8. Clubs from across the region have begun competing in the new league, bringing together talented players, coaches, referees, and families for a new chapter of high-level competition.



Along with the start of the season, N1 has introduced the [National 1 Match Day App](#), providing teams, coaches, managers, and referees with a streamlined digital resource for managing the match-day experience. The app puts important game information and reporting tools in one convenient place, helping make the process easier for everyone involved.

The inaugural season features 26 clubs from across the Midwest District 5 region, including AC Grand Rapids, Michigan Tigers FC, Nationals, Perrysburg SC, Royal Oak FC, DCFC, DCFC South Oakland, Midland SC, TBAYS, Lakeshore FC, Legends FC, Michigan Rangers FC, TKO Premier SC, MDA, Waza FC, MI Jaguars, Pato's Magic, Fort Wayne SC, BC Fire SC, Monroe United, Michigan Power FA, Eastside SC, Carpathia Kickers, Farmington SC, Holland Rovers, and United Soccer Athletes.

With division winners earning the opportunity to compete in the summer 2027 ECNL Conference League Playoffs and Finals, there is plenty at stake throughout the inaugural season. MSYSA is excited to follow the competition, development, and growth of National 1 as teams take the field and help establish this new league pathway across the region!

MSYSA TRANSITION TO 26/27 SEASONAL YEAR

Fall registration data must 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.

As clubs continue through tryouts and team formation, please remember that the new age group formation changes will officially take effect beginning with the 2026/27 seasonal year. To assist club administrators with building teams in GotSport, please review the [Managing the Age Group Formation Change in GotSport: What Clubs & Teams Need to Know](#) resource, along with additional information available on the [MSYSA website](#).

Clubs are also strongly encouraged to begin the International Transfer Clearance (ITC) process now for any players born outside the US or who have previously played soccer internationally. Approval through FIFA and US Soccer can take up to 30 days, so early submission is recommended to avoid delays in player eligibility. For any questions regarding the process, please contact [MSYSA ITC](#). Early preparation will help ensure a smooth transition into the upcoming seasonal year.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE (COI) UPDATE FOR THE 26/27 SEASONAL YEAR

As MSYSA prepares for the transition into the 2026/27 seasonal year, clubs are reminded that COIs will officially roll over on September 1, 2026. Current 2025/26 COIs will remain valid through August 31, 2026, and updated certificates will become available following the seasonal year transition.

Please note that only MSYSA Direct and Associate Members are eligible to request COIs directly through MSYSA. Clubs that are not Direct or Associate Members should contact their scheduling league to request the appropriate Certificate of Insurance. Thank you for your attention as we prepare for another successful soccer year!



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: From Volunteer to Confident Coach: How to Plan a Season Your Players Will Love

Stepping up to coach a youth soccer team can feel overwhelming, especially for parents and volunteers who may be taking on the role for the first time. In Soccer Parenting's blog, coaches are encouraged to focus on creating an organized, positive, and enjoyable experience rather than feeling pressure to have all the answers. A successful season begins with



thoughtful planning, clear communication, and an understanding of what players need at their particular stage of development.

The article highlights the important role coaches play in shaping a player's experience and reminds volunteers that confidence can grow throughout the season. By creating engaging training sessions, allowing players opportunities to learn and make decisions, and keeping enjoyment at the center of the experience, coaches can help players both their soccer skills and their love for the game. For new and returning coaches alike, the message is simple: you do not have to be perfect to make a meaningful impact. With preparation, a willingness to learn, and a player-first mindset, coaches can create a session their players will remember for all the right reasons. To read more, [click here!](#)



Soccer Parenting Blog: Raising Strong and Resilient Athletes: A Parent's Guide to Long-Term Athletic Development

In youth sports, it can be easy to focus on the next team, extra training session, or opportunity to help a player get ahead. However, Soccer Parenting's article reminds parents that long-term development is about much more than technical skills and early

specialization. Building a strong foundation of movement, encouraging a variety of physical activities, and allowing young athletes to develop at their own pace can all play an important role in helping them become capable, confident, and durable athletes.

The article also emphasizes the importance of patience, especially as young players grow and mature at different rates. A player's current size, speed, or performance does not always determine their future potential, making it important for parents and coaches to focus on long-term growth rather than immediate results. Sleep, nutrition, recovery, and intentional breaks from organized sports are also highlighted as essential parts of the development process - not setbacks.

Perhaps most importantly, resilience is built both on and off the field. Young athletes learn how to handle mistakes, losses, setbacks, and disappointment by watching how the adults around them respond. Rather than placing additional pressure on players after a difficult performance, parents can help provide perspective by focusing on effort, courage, growth, and how a player chooses to respond. By creating space for movement, recovery, learning, and even failure, we can help young athletes develop not only into better players, but into resilient individuals prepared to navigate challenges throughout their lives. 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

"In soccer, you don't get to choose when the ball comes to you. You only get to choose what you do when it arrives."

- Unknown

KEEP IN TOUCH

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