



2017 SPRING SEASON TEAM INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19 Only

The **MIDWEST REGIONAL LEAGUE's (MRL)** mission is to provide the highest standard of competitive play for youth teams that are members of US Youth Soccer Region II (the Midwest Region). The MRL offers quality league competition in our area as teams primarily play against teams outside of their state association. Also, teams playing in the 2017 Spring Season Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 and U-19/20 Premier I Divisions, vie for the chance to earn spots into the Midwest Regionals as part of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series. Teams in the 2017 Spring Season Premier I Division at Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, and U-17 also compete for an automatic qualifying slots in the 2017-18 US Youth Soccer National League.

LEVEL OF COMMITMENT EXPECTED BY MRL TEAMS

Any team looking to participate in the MRL must understand the level of commitment it takes to participate in a League that stretches across the Midwest. All teams understand that this is a Regional League and that teams may travel hundreds of miles to participate in MRL games. The determination of game sites is based in part due to home locations of teams within a division as well as field availability. Teams understand that they may not play any home games. A limited number of teams are accepted. Team success in past US Youth Soccer programs helps determine qualification for participation in the MRL. The level of competition surpasses any youth team competition within a team's state association. Teams will be competing against the best US Youth Soccer affiliated teams from across the Midwest.

MRL rules allow teams to use up to 30 players during the course of a season. There should be no reason why a team cannot field a team to play in a scheduled match as teams have the ability to use 30 players during a season. If your team chooses to roster less than the allotted number (30) it is highly recommended that the team re-evaluates its commitment to playing in the MRL. There is no greater disservice to your opponents to participate in a weekend of MRL games with minimal number of players. Teams expect opponents to field competitive teams as the expense for participation is great due to travel demands. Teams that do not fulfill their commitment to play MRL games are subject to discipline as per MRL Rule 9.04 – Discipline/Fine Schedule.

AGE GROUPS OF COMPETITION

Be sure to review the information on the MRL website in regards to US Soccer's birth year registration mandate and how this mandate affects the evolution of teams from the 2015-16 soccer calendar year to the 2016-17 soccer calendar year.

2017 Spring Season Boys and Girls competition will take place in the following age groups:

- Under-14 (2003's) – for players born on January 1, 2003 or later (team registration to take place in October)
- Under-15 (2002's) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later
- Under-16 (2001's) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later
- Under-17 (2000's) – for players born on January 1, 2000 or later
- Under-18 (1999's) – for players born on January 1, 1999 or later
- Under-19/20 (1998's+) – for players born on August 1, 1997 or later

ENTRY FEE

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the MRL is \$450 per team (to the MRL) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the MRL and later drops out of the league in accordance with MRL Rule 2.15. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees that are paid on a game-by-game basis. Team Fees are paid to your respective State Association and are to be paid to your State Association on or around August 5, 2016 as determined by your local State Association. The State Association pays Region II for all teams entered in the Spring Season. Teams do not pay entry fees directly to the MRL.

COMMUNICATION FROM/WITH MRL

E-mail is the primary means of communication within the MRL. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that accurate contact information is on file with the MRL. The MRL compiles a Pre-Season Team Information Packet of Information that is now exclusively posted on its website - <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>

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APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The Team Application deadline is **Wednesday, August 3, 2016**. Contact your State Association office for the web link in order to enter the secure application website for the MRL.

Your local State Association shall review your application and solely determine if your team shall receive State Association recommendation (approval) to participate in the MRL. A maximum of eight (8) teams* may be recommended by a state association in any one gender age group of MRL competition.

Any team at the Under-15 through Under-19/20 age groups making application to the MRL must have competed in one of US Youth Soccer's National Cup competitions during the past seasonal year and must participate in a US Youth Soccer National Cup competition during the current seasonal year. Currently, the National Cup Competitions include the National Championship Series and the National Presidents Cup. There is no National Cup Competitions Requirement for the Under-14 age group. The requirement for competing in the National Cup Competitions during the past seasonal year may be waived pending a request of waiver by a team. The MRL Commissioner in consultation with the respective State Association may grant or deny the waiver.

After State Association recommendation, the MRL will review team applications and determine if your team will be accepted into the MRL for the 2017 Spring Season. In completing the application form, teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from MRL participation.

Note: Premier I Division and Premier II Division pre-qualified slots in the Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19/20 age groups were determined based on play from previous MRL seasons. Team pre-qualified slots are reserved a slot, but are not automatically entered—that is, the teams must apply via our on-line system. If your team is listed as a Premier I Division or Premier II Division team be sure to apply by the August 3rd deadline. All Premier I Division and Premier II Division teams are also subject to review as per MRL Rules. The MRL has established a procedure to fill Premier I Division and Premier II Division slots (the 2017 Spring Season Team Selection and Division Placement Criteria document).

**-this number may be increased by the time that final selections are made.*

SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

There is a two-step approval process for the MRL. First, each team must be endorsed by its respective State Association. Second, the MRL Technical Committee shall determine the final selection and placement of all teams. Accepted teams shall be notified via website posting or an e-mail regarding their acceptance and placement into specific tiers and divisions within the MRL. **The list of teams accepted with division placement into the MRL for the 2017 Spring Season is expected to be posted on our website on or around August 19, 2016 (this date may change—check MRL website for updates).**

REFEREES

The three-man system shall be used for all games. Each team is responsible for one-half of the total referee fees per game and payment is to be made in cash prior to each game. Referee fees are as follows:

U-14:	\$60 per game per team; a total of \$120 (\$50 to Referee and \$35 to each AR)
U-15 and U-16:	\$70 per game per team; a total of \$140 (\$60 to Referee and \$40 to each AR)
U-17, U-18 and U19/20:	\$80 per game per team; a total of \$160 (\$70 to Referee and \$45 to each AR)

TEAM ROSTERS

Teams may utilize 30 players during the course of a season in accordance with Team Roster and Team Club Pass Player Roster rules. A maximum 22-player Team Roster with a “floating” Team Club Pass Roster shall be utilized in all age groups. Club Pass players may only come from within a team's club, provided that the player is a US Youth Soccer member. See MRL Rules and the MRL Team Roster and Player Guide for further information.

MRL RULES AND INFORMATION

Additional information on the MRL is available on the league website: <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>

COACHES—LICENSING REQUIREMENT

The following is the new rule that is in place for the 2016-17 soccer year including the 2017 Spring Season:

All coaches on the team bench coaching in a MRL game must have at the minimum a US Soccer “E” Coaching License or equivalent earned prior to the 2016-17 season as determined by MRL (i.e. minimum NSCAA National Diploma)

(There is no requirement for a coach on a team roster holding a minimum a US Soccer National “C” Coaching License or equivalent).

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PERMISSION TO TRAVEL

Teams are not required to complete Permission to Travel permits/forms for games played outside of their State Association as permission is automatically granted by State Association approval of the team for MRL play.

COMPETITION FORMAT

All competitions in every age group and subdivision shall be round robin in nature (except Development play—see separate section below). There will be no end of season playoffs to determine Regional Wild Cards or teams that earn promotion into the Premier I or Premier II tiers. Based on the number of teams placed into subdivisions, teams may play up to a total of 11 MRL games during the course of the Spring Season (each team will be scheduled for a minimum of five MRL games—as of December 1, 2016). **Please be aware of the number of games that teams will be required to play. MRL teams are required to fulfill their commitment by playing out their entire MRL schedule of games.** The MRL Commission shall determine if a penalty is imposed for failure to fulfill a team's schedule.

--In the Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19/20 age groups, the Premier I Division and Premier II Division teams are determined based on previous season performance (i.e. promotion/relegation). A list of teams who have earned Premier I Division and Premier II Division slots for the 2017 Spring Season is posted at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>. The MRL, in conjunction with respective state associations, will review team applications in accordance with its Policy on Returning MRL Teams.

LOCATION OF GAMES--HOSTING MRL GAMES

There are three categories for hosting MRL games:

--One-Off hosting—a team hosts a one off game between itself and another team from within its division. Host bears all costs for hosting or if teams agree, the teams may share costs (usually for games played at a neutral location).

--Group Hosting--a team hosts a number of teams over a weekend amongst teams from within its division. Host team bears all costs for hosting

--MRL Hosting—MRL hosts games at a multiple field location. There are no field costs to the teams for playing matches at MRL hosted weekend sites. The MRL hosted weekends for the 2017 Spring Season are Overland Park KS (Overland Park Soccer Complex—3-12 all-weather turf fields) on April 14-15-16; Rockford IL (Sportscore Two -- 6 synthetic fields and grass fields) on April 22-23 and April 29-30; St Louis MO (Lou Fusz Soccer Complex-8 synthetic fields) on April 29-30; Muscatine IA (Muscatine Soccer Complex-6-8 grass fields) on May 6-7; and Westfield IN (Grand Park—7 synthetic fields) on May 13-14. Additional sites may be added

MUST BE AVAILABLE TO PLAY WEEKENDS

The four 2017 Spring Season **Must Be Available to Play** weekends are on April 15-16, April 22-23, April 29-30 and May 6-7. Teams are excused from MRL play on these weekends due to state cup conflicts. However, it is the responsibility of teams, affected by their inability to play on Must Be Available to Play Weekends, to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the Spring Season. A team's requirement to be available to play on these MRL weekends ceases once the division schedule is agreed to by the teams. The purpose of the Must Be Available to Play Weekends is to insure common play dates. MRL allows flexibility in scheduling providing all teams in a division agree to scheduling flexibility.

PREMIER I AND II SHOWCASE EVENT

Our first **MRL Spring Season College Showcase Event** will be held in Tampa FL on February 18-20, 2017. This event is open only to Premier I and Premier II team in the Boys and Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 age groups. There are a limited number of slots and participation by teams in these tiers is voluntary. Teams participating should know that the event will feature one match per day (3 matches) and matches can be counted as part of the MRL 2017 Spring Season. The fee for the event will be \$510 for U-15 and U-16 teams and \$540 for U-17 and U-18 teams and includes field, medical, referee (including match fees) and admin costs for the event. More information will be available to teams during the MR Scheduling process.

THE 2017 Spring SEASON – START AND END DATES

Spring Season play may begin on February 18, 2017. All MRL play must be completed on or before June 11, 2017 (subject to change).

July 19, 2016

GENERAL SCHEDULING INFORMATION

Premier I Divisions and Premier II Divisions at Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19/20— On or about August 20, 2016 after the placement of teams into tiers and subdivisions, teams will be provided with information on the MRL scheduling process through a group email sent to each Team's Coach and Club Director of Coaching of teams. The MRL provides the opportunity for teams to schedule all games in a division in accordance with MRL procedures. All teams in a subdivision must agree to the entire schedule by a date to be determined by the MRL. Availability of fields at MRL hosted sites is limited and will be provided to teams on a first completely approved scheduled, first served basis. A Scheduling Coordinator (SC) who will be appointed by the MRL from within each division to assist in the process. **Our hope is that only Club Directors of Coaching, the Head Coach of a participating team within the division, or a Full-time Club Administrator will be selected as the SC.** Generally, this person will be someone who has scheduled MRL games in the past and understands the nuances in scheduling on a regional basis. Schedules not completed by end date may result in fines assessed against teams as well as the MRL scheduling the division with no regard for any team's availability. MRL may schedule such games at MRL sites and teams should expect to play one game per day with Saturday kickoffs as early as 7:00 am and Sunday kick offs no earlier than 1:00 pm.

First Divisions in all Age Groups and Boys and Girls Under-14 Premier Division Qualification groups—On or about August 23, 2016 after the placement of teams into tiers and subdivisions, teams will be provided with information on the MRL scheduling process through a group email sent to each Team's Coach and Club Director of Coaching of teams. The MRL provides the opportunity for teams to schedule all games in a division in accordance with MRL procedures. All teams in a subdivision must agree to the entire schedule by a date to be determined by the MRL. Availability of fields at MRL hosted sites is limited and will be provided to teams on a first completely approved scheduled, first served basis. A Scheduling Coordinator (SC) who will be appointed by the MRL from within each division to assist in the process. **Our hope is that only Club Directors of Coaching, the Head Coach of a participating team within the division, or a Full-time Club Administrator will be selected as the SC.** Generally, this person will be someone who has scheduled MRL games in the past and understands the nuances in scheduling on a regional basis. Schedules not completed by end date may result in fines assessed against teams as well as the MRL scheduling the division with no regard for any team's availability. MRL may schedule such games at MRL sites and teams should expect to play one game per day with Saturday kickoffs as early as 7:00 am and Sunday kick offs no earlier than 1:00 pm.

--Teams should understand that due to the nature of scheduling of games for teams from across the region that **scheduling games for the benefit of a single coach who coaches multiple teams should not be expected.** Time conflicts will occur for those coaches that coach multiple teams on MRL weekends and the MRL, as well as the other teams within a division, are under no obligation to assist these coaches with their conflicts.

--MRL games may be scheduled during other US Youth Soccer sanctioned competitions during the Spring Season weekends, but must be played under MRL rules and approved by the MRL Commissioner. Teams and host organization will be held responsible for MRL rules compliance in these situations.

--Once schedules are developed, schedule changes are permitted in accordance with MRL Scheduling Policy.