



US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL LEAGUE

2016-2017 SEASONAL YEAR INFORMATION

as of June 13, 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

The US Youth Soccer National League (NL) will conduct its 10th seasonal year of competition in 2016-2017.

We will have league play in Boys and Girls age groups as follows:

- Under-15 (2002's) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later -- each gender will have up to a maximum of 16 teams
- Under-16 (2001's) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later -- each gender will have up to a maximum of 32 teams
- Under-17 (2000's) – for players born on January 1, 2000 or later -- each gender will have up to a maximum of 32 teams
- Under-18 (1999's) – for players born on January 1, 1999 or later -- each gender will have up to a maximum of 32 teams
- Under-19/20 (1998's+) – for players born on August 1, 1997 or later -- each gender will have up to a maximum of 16 teams

The National League is an extension of the highly successful US Youth Soccer Regional Leagues (Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League and Far West Regional League). The National League provides an avenue for teams to play in meaningful matches against top competition from across the country for continued development. In addition to recruiting opportunities, National League teams compete for the National League title for their gender age groups and 4 slots in each gender age group of the annual US Youth Soccer National Championships Finals, the oldest and most prestigious youth soccer national championships.

Teams that earn their spot in the National League have a proven track record of success in US Youth Soccer regional and national competitions, and are among the nation's best. Hundreds of college scouts attend each National League weekend, creating another significant opportunity for the nation's collegiate and National Team coaches to see National League players in an environment of meaningful play, citing the competitive level of each game as every team has to earn their spot in the competition, regardless of club affiliation or location.

Teams either automatically qualify for National League spots, or are selected by the NL Committee for remaining open slots. Qualification and selection spots may vary based on a specific gender age group (specific information is provided on each gender age group on pages 2-11).

2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS

Boys Under-15 (2002's) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-13 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-13 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams. Automatic Qualifiers are:

- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Champions/Representatives in the Under-13 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions in the Under-13 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year. Due to the four-division structure of the Far West Regional League, there are no automatic qualifiers from Regional League play to the NL from Region IV.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

SELECTION OF TEAMS FOR OPEN SLOTS

The NL Committee shall select teams from the eligible team applicant pool to fill any open slots. Since Regional League and Regional Cup play determines if a team is eligible to participate, the NL Committee shall only use the results from 2015-2016 Regional League play, and results from 2015-2016 National Championship Series play (State Cup and Regionals competition) in the selection process.

The specific list of slots for this age group can be found here:

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/national_league/201617_national_league_qualifiers/

The list of teams accepted into the NL for 2016-2017 seasonal year will be announced on or around August 2, 2016.

PLACEMENT OF TEAMS INTO SUB DIVISIONS

The 16 teams in this age group will be divided into 2 subdivisions of 8 teams each. The 8 teams from the 2016 Nationals (4 Regional Cup Champions and 4 returning NL teams) will be split between the 2 subdivisions. Remaining teams will be placed into the subdivisions. Teams will play all teams within their subdivision in order to fulfill their NL seasonal year game requirement (7 games; see paragraph 8). In situations where less than 16 teams are accepted into the NL in this age group, the NL Committee shall determine the final number of teams selected and the placement of teams into subdivisions, if applicable. The top two teams from each of the 2 subdivisions qualify for the 2017 Nationals.

2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Boys Under-16 (2001's) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-14 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-14 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-14 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

- Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (8 teams) in the Under-14 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.
- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-14 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-14 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

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2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Boys Under-17 (2000's) – for players born on January 1, 2000 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-15 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-15 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-15 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

- Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (8 teams) in the Under-15 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.
- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-15 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-15 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

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Boys Under-18 (1999's) – for players born on January 1, 1999 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-16 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-16 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-16 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

- Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (8 teams) in the Under-16 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.
- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-16 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-16 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

SELECTION OF TEAMS FOR OPEN SLOTS

The NL Committee shall select teams from the eligible team applicant pool to fill any open slots. Since Regional League and Regional Cup play determines if a team is eligible to participate, the NL Committee shall only use the results from 2015-2016 Regional League play, results from 2015-2016 National Championship Series play (State Cup and Regionals competition), and 2015-2016 National League play in the selection process.

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Boys Under-19/20 (1998's+) – for players born on August 1, 1997 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-17 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-17 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-17 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

--**Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (the NL representatives to the Nationals) in the Under-17 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.

--**Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Champions/Representatives in the Under-17 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

--**Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions in the Under-17 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year. Due to the four-division structure of the Far West Regional League, there are no automatic qualifiers from Regional League play to the NL from Region IV.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

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Girls Under-15 (2002's) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-13 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-13 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams. Automatic Qualifiers are:

- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Champions/Representatives in the Under-13 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions in the Under-13 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year. Due to the four-division structure of the Far West Regional League, there are no automatic qualifiers from Regional League play to the NL from Region IV.

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2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Girls Under-16 (2001's) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-14 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-14 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-14 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

- Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (8 teams) in the Under-14 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.
- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-14 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-14 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

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2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Girls Under-17 (2000's) – for players born on January 1, 2000 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-15 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-15 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-15 age group.

AUTOMATIC QUALIFICATION

For the 2016-2017 seasonal year, the participating teams in this age group are determined through a combination of automatic qualifiers and selected teams.

- Returning National League teams:** The top returning teams from the 2015-2016 National League seasonal year (8 teams) in the Under-15 age group, automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year.
- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-15 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-15 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

Any team that attempts to claim an automatic slot after moving clubs from the 2015-2016 seasonal year to the 2016-2017 seasonal year, must show that the team is in compliance for all rules regarding Returning Teams in its respective Regional League for 2016-2017 as well as receiving endorsement for NL play from its state association.

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2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Girls Under-18 (1999's) – for players born on January 1, 1999 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-16 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-16 age group, or
- The team reached the semifinals of its respective 2016 Regional Cup competition in the Under-16 age group.

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- Regional Cup Champions/Representatives:** The Regional Cup Finalists in the Under-16 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 seasonal year (2 teams from each Region).
- Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions and top finishers (where applicable) as Under-16 teams from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year.

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2. ELIGIBILITY, QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF TEAMS--continued

Girls Under-19/20 (1998's+) – for players born on August 1, 1997 or later

WHO MAY APPLY

In order to be eligible to compete in this age group and be considered for a NL slot, a team must meet one of the following criteria:

- The team must have played in the **2015-2016 seasonal year** as an **Under-17 team** in one of the US Youth Soccer recognized Regional Leagues (i.e. Region I Champions League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League, Far West Regional League), or
- The team must have participated in the NL during the 2015-2016 seasonal year in the Under-17 age group, or
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--**Regional League Champions:** The Regional League champions in the Under-17 age group from the 2015-2016 seasonal year also automatically qualify for the 2016-2017 NL seasonal year. Due to the four-division structure of the Far West Regional League, there are no automatic qualifiers from Regional League play to the NL from Region IV.

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3. TEAM ROSTERS—PLAYER CONTINUITY

Teams that are selected to play in the NL or have automatically qualified to play in the NL for the 2016-2017 seasonal year must show a 9-player continuity from the 2015-2016 seasonal year as follows:

“All teams that are accepted for play in the NL for the 2016-2017 seasonal year must show player continuity from their 2015-2016 seasonal year team/club. At all times during the 2016-2017 seasonal year, a NL team must have on its National League roster, to be eligible to play during the 2016-2017 seasonal year, no less than 9 of the players that were on a roster of any teams within such team’s Club during the 2015-2016 seasonal year. Since NL teams must compete in State Cup competitions in order to be eligible to apply. It will be incumbent upon, and the obligation of, State Associations and their respective Regional offices (due to participation in Regional Cup and/or Regional League competitions) to determine that teams have complied with this requirement since they alone have the documentation to verify compliance with minimum of this 9-returning players rule.”

4. TEAM APPLICATIONS

All eligible teams (automatic qualifying and selected teams) apply to play in the NL for the 2016-2017 seasonal year through the following link off of the US Youth Soccer website:

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/national_league/national_league_application/

The team application entry deadline is Thursday, July 7, 2016

5. TEAM FEE

The team fee is \$2,750. There are no additional fees, such as ref fees at games, due to the NL. The NL shall cover all costs associated with conducting NL matches, including but not limited to field rental costs, referee fees/expenses etc. US Youth Soccer shall not be liable or responsible for transportation, lodging, or injury to persons or property incurred during the course of or travels to and from NL events.

Payment can be made via check, money order or credit card. If paying by credit card the team will be charged a service fee in addition to the team fee. Team fee is not due until a team is formally accepted into the National League (due by September 1, 2016).

6. COMMITMENT TO PLAY

Teams undertake a high level of commitment necessary to participate in the US Youth Soccer National League. With such commitment comes a respect towards opponents. Any team that fails to appear for NL games are subject to penalties as determined by the NL Committee.

7. QUALIFYING FOR THE 2017 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS FINALS

Four representatives from the National League Under-15 (2002’s), Under-16 (2001’s), Under-17 (2000’s), Under-18 (1999’s), and Under-19 (1998’s+) gender age groups shall qualify for the 2017 US Youth Soccer National Championships Finals in July 2017. The 4 2016-2017 seasonal year Regional Cup winners will also advance to Nationals creating National Championships Finals featuring 8 teams in the Under-15 (2002’s), Under-16 (2001’s), Under-17 (2000’s), Under-18 (1999’s), and Under-19 (1998’s) gender age groups.

In accordance with NL rules, in order to be eligible to advance to the US Youth National Championships Finals, teams participating in the NL must also participate in their respective State Cup competition in the current seasonal year (as part of the National Championship Series in 2016-2017), and the top regional league of each region should the team qualify.

8. NUMBER OF GAMES AND LOCATION OF GAMES

Each team will play a 7-game schedule playing each team within its subdivision age group one time. Teams will play during 2 NL play weekends (4 games during the first weekend of play and 3 games during the second weekend of play).

All teams (in all age groups) will participate in the first weekend of National League play---there are no exceptions. The first weekend of play for **all Boys Teams is on December 8-11 2016** (one game per day). The first weekend of play for **all Girls Teams is on December 1-4, 2016** (one game per day). Games will primarily be played at the Gillette Soccer Complex in Wilson NC although some matches will be played in Rocky Mount NC and other fields in the area. The first events are operated solely by the NL and are not affiliated with any local showcase event.

All Boys teams will be assigned by the NL Committee for their second weekend of play primarily based on minimizing high school play conflicts where possible. Teams will be assigned to play during either the Disney Showcase Tournament in Orlando FL held on December 27-30, 2016, or the Players Showcase in Nevada on March 10-12, 2017.

All Girls teams will be assigned by the NL Committee for their second weekend of play primarily based on minimizing high school play conflicts where possible. Teams will be assigned to play during either the Disney Showcase Tournament in Orlando FL held on December 31, 2016-January 3, 2017, or the Players Showcase in Las Vegas NV on March 17-19, 2017.

Locations and dates are subject to change. NL games that are tied in with the Disney and Players Showcase Tournaments to provide exposure of NL players for advancement to a higher level.

All teams are also required to coordinate hotel stays at the NL's first events in North Carolina with the NL's designated hotel provider. All teams assigned to play during a Showcase Tournament are required to coordinate hotel stays through Showcase Tournament hotel coordinators or team will be subject to a substantial penalty.

9. ADMINISTRATION

The NL is governed by the US Youth Soccer National League Charter that has established a National League Committee to administer the NL. A Commissioner has been appointed to oversee the day-to-day operations of the NL. The Committee has adopted NL rules to administer the NL.

For more information, please email National League Commissioner Paul Luchowski at nationalleague@usyouthsoccer.org