



TO: ED's and CEO's of US Youth Soccer State Associations  
FROM: Paul Luchowski, Leagues Program Director  
DATE: April 3, 2018  
RE: Leagues Program Update

*This memo is being distributed to State Association Leaders and intended for internal use only. However, feel free to distribute within your State Association administration and management. Thanks*

This US Youth Soccer Leagues Program update is being provided so as to ensure that everyone is informed of the latest improvements while serving to further clarify the direction of the Leagues Program. Please know that many improvements to the US Youth Soccer Leagues Program are being implemented in time for the 2018-19 soccer season.

It is important to note that the direction of the program, including the general structure, has been reviewed and approved by the US Youth Soccer CEO and endorsed by the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors. Additionally, the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors has approved the accompanying "Leagues Policy" document.

In addition to the general information that follows, a two-part roll out of the Program on a region-by region basis is planned. Scheduled for the next 30 days, or so, the specifics within each region regarding the leagues structure and staffing will be disseminated as follows:

- South Region – expect announcement to be made on or around Friday, April 6, 2018
- East Region - expect announcement to be made on or around Monday, April 9, 2018
- West Region – expect announcement to be made on or around Monday, May 7, 2018
- Midwest Region – expect announcement to be made on or around Monday, May 7, 2018

Once League Managers are finalized, they will share additional information regarding team registration, selection/placement and 2018-19 scheduling. Thank you for your continued patience as the necessary structure to ensure long-term success is being established.

Thanks.



# US YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUES PROGRAM for 2018-19

## SUMMARY

- The program will be called the “US Youth Soccer National League” and will begin with the 2018-19 US Youth Soccer seasonal year.
- The existing National League logo will be used pending the full rebranding of US Youth Soccer.
- The program will include the National League as well as each of the Multi-State Leagues (formerly known as Regional Leagues) that are being formed. The existing Regional Leagues (Eastern Regional League, Midwest Regional League, Southern Regional Premier League and Far West Regional League) will cease to exist after the conclusion of the 2017-18 soccer season.
- For branding purposes, each of the Multi-State Leagues will be referred to as “National League,” by a geographic location and shall be known as “Conferences.” Examples of Conference names that are expected to be used are:
  - National League New England Conference;
  - National League Mid-South Conference;
  - National League Great Lakes Conference;
  - National League Desert Conference;
  - National League Northwest Conference;
  - National League Frontier Conference.
- The geographic boundaries of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) shall be fluid. The teams/clubs shall choose within which Multi-State League (Conference) to participate.
- Plans currently call for a minimum of 13 Multi-State Leagues (Conferences).
- Some of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will have very similar boundaries that exist with the current Regional Leagues or divisions of Regional Leagues, while other Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will have new geographic areas and may cross existing regional boundaries.

## GOVERNANCE and ADMINISTRATION

- The US Youth Soccer Leagues Policy which has been approved by the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors shall be the governing document for the program.
- The National League Management Group shall oversee all aspects of the Leagues program. Members of the National League Management Group include the National League Commissioner, full-time National League Managers, the CEO of US Youth Soccer, and the General Managers of the East, Midwest, South and West Regions. The Chair of the National League Management Group shall be the National League Commissioner.
- Each of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will be managed by a League Manager who shall handle the day-to-day aspects of each of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences). League Managers report to the Commissioner of the National League who reports to the CEO of US Youth Soccer. League Managers may be full-time or part-time, as needed, and will be announced on a rolling basis through mid-summer.
- Each of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will have an Oversight Management Group consisting of the League Manager, representatives of appropriate State Association(s) (state association employed soccer professionals), and representatives of appropriate Clubs (Club Leaders). The League Manager will be the Chair of the Oversight Management Group within each Multi-State League (Conference).
- A Marketing/Communications specialist will be assigned full-time to the National League program to promote the program through national outlets as well as through the teams/clubs.

## OPERATIONS

- The Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will be comprised of the traditional team-centered competitions, as well as newly formed club-based competitions, when appropriate.
- All teams and clubs participating in the program will register through a central team registration system with all team/club fees paid directly to the US Youth Soccer National Office.
- Each Multi-State League (Conference), on an annual basis, shall determine its structure within the parameters established by the National League Management Group.
- The National League Management Group shall establish the Rules of the competition with special emphasis on team roster flexibility (expect a maximum roster size of 30 with liberal Club Pass rules).
- Each Multi-State League (Conference) shall establish their schedules in accordance with the parameters as established by the National League Rules.
- Each Multi-State League (Conference), on an annual basis, shall establish their tiers of competition, application process, qualification process, selection process and placement process of teams in accordance with the parameters as established by the National League Rules.
- Each Multi-State League (Conference) shall work with the involved State Association(s) to ensure that teams are properly sanctioned through the proper US Youth Soccer team and player registration processes and that teams are properly endorsed by their respective State Association(s).
- Each Multi-State League (Conference), on an annual basis, shall establish their genders and age groups of competition, in accordance with the parameters as established by the National League Rules. For 2018-19, each of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) expect to offer 13U through 19U age groups of competition for boys and girls (the 12U age group will be offered in those areas that currently offer this age group in their respective Regional Leagues).
- It is expected that each of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will strive to offer multiple tiers of competition as the local marketplace demands. For example, in a 3-tier structure, the top tier will be called "Premier I", the second tier will be named "Premier II" and a third tier "First Division." In a 2-tier structure, the top tier will likely be called "Premier I", and the second tier "First Division."
- Within each Multi-State League (Conference) the concept of promotion and relegation from season to season between the tiers and an annual qualification of teams from other competitions (primarily US Youth Soccer) shall be stressed.
- Earned slots in the top tiers of existing Regional Leagues will be honored by the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) when such tiers are formulated for the 2018-19 soccer year and the respective soccer seasons.
- Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) are open to US Youth Soccer member teams with qualification into such competitions based on success in US Youth Soccer competitions (i.e. state, regional or national sanctioned leagues and National Championship Series competitions within US Youth Soccer). For the 2018-19 season, the Multi-State League (Conference) system will also provide a pathway for teams currently (in 2017-18) playing in non-US Youth sanctioned competitions to be considered for slots into the 2018-19 program (e.g. teams playing in the 14U USSDA may be integrated into this programming at 15U in 2018-19). As a rule, teams that continue to play in the US Youth Soccer Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will be required to play in the state level of the National Championship Series.

## ***NATIONAL LEAGUE AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES***

- Champions of the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) in the appropriate gender age groups will qualify either directly into the National League (for the following soccer season 2019-20) or into a playoff (to be held in June/July 2019) for a chance to qualify into the National League (for the following soccer season 2019-20). Pathways will be determined once the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) for the 2018-19 soccer season are finalized.
- Still to be determined is the manner by which top teams from the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will qualify for Regional Cup competitions. Similar to what occurs now (with teams from the 4-Regional Leagues advancing to Regionals or qualifying for National League), in 2018-19 the Multi-State Leagues (Conferences) will continue to advance champions from various gender age groups into a playoff for advancement into the respective Regionals (as part of the National Championships Series) or direct advancement to the respective Regionals in early June/July 2019.

## ***US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL SHOWCASES***

- In addition to Multi-State League (Conference) play, as an added value to participation in the US Youth Soccer National League program, participating teams/clubs will be invited to participate in a series of US Youth Soccer National Showcase events that are to be scheduled in 2018-19 and beyond (similar to the Girls National League/Showcase event that took place at the IMG Academy on January 13-15, 2018 combining National League matches with showcase matches featuring Regional League teams).
- Tentative events are being scheduled for November 2018, January 2019, February 2019 and April 2019.