



## 2023-24 SEASON TEAM INFORMATION

### WHAT IS THE US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL LEAGUE?

The **Midwest Conference** is one of 13 conferences that fall under the scope of the National League and operate at a multistate level — providing high-level competition on a consistent basis at a targeted local level (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota).

The Midwest Conference's Tier 1 divisions (team-based) offer its teams an opportunity to qualify for the 2024 US Youth Soccer (USYS) Midwest Regional Championships, which are held annually each summer. Tier 1 teams within the Midwest Conference also have the opportunity to qualify for National League Conference Playoffs, which provides teams with a chance to play cross-conference matches in a national setting with increased exposure to college, professional and national team scouts. The Tier 2 divisions of the conference (Premier II) offer more locally based travel in the conference and the opportunity to earn promotion to Tier 1. Conference Qualifiers (Tier 3) in various states offer play in-state or within city metropolitan areas and the opportunity to earn promotion to Tier 2.

### NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCE PATHWAY



## INTRODUCTION

This document will serve as an overview of the conference and should be read prior to submitting an application to the conference. Once your team has been accepted, you should always review the National League rules, Conference Operating Procedures (COPs) and FAQ's.

## CONFERENCE CALENDAR

The seasonal conference calendar can be found on the homepage of the Midwest Conference website. Here you will find all important dates for the upcoming 2023-2024 seasonal year including (but not limited to) application dates, scheduling meeting deadlines, conference hosted event dates, college showcase dates and must-be-available-to-play dates.

## COMMITMENT

Any team looking to participate in the USYS Midwest Conference must understand the level of commitment it takes to participate in a League that stretches across 11 different state associations. All teams understand that this is a multi-state league and that teams may travel hundreds of miles to participate in conference games. Teams understand that they may not play any true "home" games. A limited number of teams are accepted into the Midwest Conference, so it is important that each team makes the commitment to travel BEFORE applying to the conference.

## BOYS and GIRLS AGE GROUPS OF COMPETITION

The 2023-24 USYS Midwest Conference will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2011 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2010 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2009 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2008 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later
- 19 and Under (18/19U) – for players born on January 1, 2006 or later

## ENTRY FEE

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the USYS Midwest Conference is **\$725** per team, per season (paid to US Youth Soccer through your GotSport account) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the conference and later drops out. State Associations may have an additional fee, based on the state you are from. This fee will be included in your total at the time of application. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees, which will be paid in accordance with the Conference Operating Procedures. Team Fees are paid directly to US Youth Soccer through your GotSport account or mailed in by check. Payment details will be listed at the time of application. Your respective State Association will be reimbursed by US Youth Soccer. Teams do not pay entry fees directly to their State Association. Teams may also be required to pay additional event fees for conference hosted events, which can be seen later in this document.

## CONFERENCE BOUNDARIES

USYS Midwest Conference boundaries are for youth teams that are members of USYS State Associations of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana, although teams from outside these areas may also apply to participate. B13U-18/19U and G13U-14U teams from Michigan and Indiana may choose to play in either the Midwest Conference or the Great Lakes Conference based on their location, but once a conference is chosen, they must remain in that conference for subsequent years or start in the lowest tier. G15U-18/19U teams from Michigan will play in the Midwest Conference due to fall conflicts with high school in Great Lakes Conference states. B13U-18/19U and G13U-18/19U teams from Indiana may choose to play in either the Midwest Conference or the Great Lakes Conference based on their location. Once a team from Michigan or Indiana selects a conference they must remain in that conference for subsequent seasons, or start from the lowest tier. For Minnesota, G13U and G14U teams are expected to play in the Midwest Conference, while at G15U-18/19U teams are expected to play in the Great Lakes Conference due to their high school soccer season conflicts in the fall season.

Teams based in the Midwest Region are encouraged to participate in the Midwest/Great Lakes Conference but may choose to play in one of the other US Youth Soccer National Leagues, with written consent from the league manager.

## SEASONS OF PLAY

### 2023 FALL SEASON

**Boys and Girls 13U-14U competitions.** The 14U competition during the 2023 Fall Season will feature Premier I, Premier II and Conference Qualifier tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the tiers to determine the 2024 Spring Season placement of teams into tiers. As the 13U's is the entry age group for the Conferences, the State Associations will rank teams for admission into the Conferences. 13U teams will be grouped geographically in the fall season to determine the Premier I and Premier II divisions for the spring season.

**Girls 15U through 18/19U competitions.** Due to avoiding conflicts with high school soccer, the Midwest Conference will offer its 15U through 18/19U competition during the 2023 Fall Season. Girls competitions in these age groups during the 2023 Fall Season will feature Elite 64 Regional League Midwest, Premier I, Premier II and Conference Qualifier Divisions of play with promotion and relegation between the tiers for the following soccer year.

**Boys 15U Developmental Competition.** This age group generally features 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders. We will offer development play for the Boys 15U age group. Teams interested in this competition, which will not involve promotion or relegation but rather creating a competition platform for players born in 2009 that are in 8th grade while their 9th grade teammates are participating in high school soccer.

## **2024 SPRING SEASON**

**Boys and Girls 13U and 14U competitions.** The 13U-14U competition during the 2024 Spring Season will feature Premier I, Premier II and Conference Qualifier Division tiers of play (primarily based on the results of the 2023 Fall Season of play) with promotion and relegation between the tiers for the following soccer year.

**Boys 15U through 18/19U competitions.** Due to avoiding conflicts with high school soccer, the Midwest Conference will primarily offer its 15U through 18/19U competition during the 2024 Spring Season. Boys competitions in these age groups during the 2024 Spring Season will feature Elite 64 Regional League Midwest, Premier I, Premier II and Conference Qualifier Divisions of play with promotion and relegation between the Premier Division tiers for the following soccer year.

**Girls 15U Developmental Competition.** This age group generally features 8th and 9th graders. Teams interested in this competition which will not involve promotion or relegation but rather creating a competition platform for players born in 2009 that are in 8th grade while their 9th grade teammates are participating in high school soccer.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

- The Team Application period to participate in the 2023 Fall Season 14U (Boys and Girls), Developmental B15U and G15-19U will **open on or around May 22, 2023 and close on June 30, 2023.**
- The Team Application period to participate in the 2024 Spring Season B15U through B19U and Developmental G15U age groups will **open on or around July 24, 2023 and close on September 8, 2023.**
- The Team Application period to participate in the 2024 Spring Season 13U and 14U (boys and girls) age groups will **open on or around July 24, 2023 and close on November 3, 2023.**

Note: Elite 64 Regional League Midwest competition applications are accepted prior to the Team vs Team application windows opening. All Elite 64 Regional League Midwest teams must still register through GotSport within the dates listed above.

## **SELECTION AND PLACEMENT**

The application link will be posted on the conference website, in the Latest Updates box on the dates listed above. Following your application, USYS Midwest Conference will send your team information to your State Association so they may review and recommend the application for review by the selection group. After State Association recommendation, the USYS Midwest Conference Selection Group will review team applications and determine acceptance into the conference. In completing any application into the USYS Midwest Conference, teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from conference participation. State approved team applications received from clubs returning from other leagues will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for suitable introduction to the conference at the discretion of the Selection Group and the league manager.

## **REFEREES**

USYS Midwest Conference games will use a 3-man referee system. Each team is responsible for one-half of the total referee fees per game and payment is to be made in cash or predetermined payment method\* prior to each game as follows:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 13U and 14U:     | \$85 per game per team; a total of \$170 (\$70 to Referee and \$50 to each AR)  |
| 15U and 16U:     | \$95 per game per team; a total of \$190 (\$80 to Referee and \$55 to each AR)  |
| 17U and 18U/19U: | \$105 per game per team; a total of \$210 (\$90 to Referee and \$60 to each AR) |

Teams are responsible for contacting their relevant referee assignor in order to ensure match officials are present for their games. The team listed as the "Host" on the schedule takes on this responsibility. The full list of approved referee assignors can be found on the conference homepage.

\*If hosting, pre-determined payments methods may be used ONLY if agreed upon by ALL teams and the approved referee assignor prior to scheduling such club hosted weekend or one off game.

## TEAM ROSTERS

Teams may utilize thirty players during a season on a conference roster in accordance with National League Rules. A maximum 22-player team roster with additional use of a 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. All conference rosters shall be submitted to the league through the GotSport platform.

## INFORMATION, RULES, AND CONFERENCE OPERATING PROCEDURES (COP's)

Information, Rules, and COP's on the USYS Midwest Conference may be found on the Midwest Conference website at: <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/midwest-conference/>

## COACHING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Coaches of teams within the USYS Midwest Conference must achieve a level of coaching education in accordance with the Conference Operating Procedures where all coaches within the team bench area during a game must have a minimum of a US Soccer "D" Coaching License or equivalent prior to the 2023-24 season including but not limited to a United Soccer Coaches Advanced National Diploma. If you have coaches on the coaching education pathway, this requirement may be waived only upon a written request to the league manager with documentation showing the coaching education pathway taken by the coach.

## 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 USYS Midwest Conference play.

## COMPETITION FORMAT

All competitions in every age group shall be round robin. There will be no end of season playoffs (unless otherwise stated). Based on the number of teams placed into subdivisions, teams may play a minimum of 3 games and up to a total of 9 USYS Midwest Conference games during the course of the season. USYS Midwest Conference teams are required to fulfill their commitment by playing out their entire conference schedule of games.

## ADVANCEMENT TO REGIONALS

The top Premier I team from each age group and gender of the USYS Midwest Conference will qualify for 2024 Midwest Regional Championships in the same seasonal year as the USYS Midwest Conference. Specific allocations will be designated early in the spring season. To remain qualified for Regionals, a team must also play in their state association's State Cup competition. Please note that 13U and 14U Regional qualifiers come from the spring season standings, not the fall season. Any team that achieves an automatic qualification slot to Regionals from the conference is expected to honor the commitment to participate in the Midwest Regional Competition. Failure to field a team in such Regional Competition will result in a \$500 league fine.

## QUALIFICATION INTO 2024-25 NATIONAL CONFERENCE PLAYOFFS

Teams placed in the top tier of the Conference in the Elite 64 Regional League Midwest division or Premier I division, will have opportunities to automatically qualify and compete within the national league conference playoffs for the 2024-2025 season. All automatic qualifiers come from the National League Conferences based on teams' performances in the 2023-24 season. An application process will then be used to select teams to fill in any open slots. National League P.R.O. information can be found [HERE](#), for any other questions, please contact [nationalleague@usyouthsoccer.org](mailto:nationalleague@usyouthsoccer.org).

## LOCATION OF GAMES - HOSTING

There are three categories for hosting USYS Midwest Conference games:

**USYS Midwest Conference Hosted Weekends.** USYS Midwest Conference hosts games at multiple field locations. There will be additional costs to the teams for playing matches at USYS Midwest Conference hosted weekend sites, to cover the additional fees required for facility costs and safely staffing these events. The USYS Midwest Conference hosted weekends for the 2023 Fall Season and the 2024 Spring Season will be posted on the midwest conference website.

**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 at the time of scheduling, the teams may share costs (usually for games played at a neutral location). Split costs must be agreed at the time of scheduling.

**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 or if the teams agree at the time of scheduling, the teams may share costs (usually for games played at a neutral location). Split costs must be agreed at the time of scheduling.

## MUST BE AVAILABLE TO PLAY WEEKENDS

Must be **available** to play weekends for 2023 Fall Season are September 9-10, September 16-17, September 23-24 & September 30-Oct 1. Must be **available** to play dates in Spring 2024 are April 20-21, April 27-28, May 4-5 & May 11-12. Teams are only excused from USYS Midwest Conference play on these weekends due to USYS 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 USYS Midwest Conference games on other weekends during the Fall Season. A team’s requirement to be available to play on these USYS Midwest Conference weekends ceases once the division schedule is agreed to by the teams. The purpose of the “must be available to play” weekends is to ensure common play dates. USYS Midwest Conference allows flexibility in scheduling providing all teams in a division agree to scheduling flexibility.

## GENERAL SCHEDULING INFORMATION

For 2023-24, all scheduling will be done remotely. Designated Scheduling Coordinators (DSC’s) may be appointed to each division, once the brackets have been published. Full details will be provided prior to scheduling, for the scheduling deadlines, please view the Conference Calendar.

Teams participating in the USYS Midwest Conference must be available to play and schedule on the published conference dates. By submitting your team application, your team is committing to play and schedule on the published dates for the conference.

Teams should understand that due to the nature of scheduling of games for teams from across multiple states, **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 USYS Midwest Conference weekends and the USYS Midwest Conference, other teams within the conference, are under no obligation to assist these coaches with their conflicts. Once schedules are developed, schedule changes are permitted in accordance with USYS Midwest Conference scheduling policy.

## CONFERENCE HOSTED WEEKENDS

Conference hosted weekend will take place on the following weekends:

### Fall Season 2023

|                 |                |                                  |   |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| September 9-10  | Rantoul, IL    | Up to 8 fields (turf)            | \$250 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$100)* |
| September 16-17 | Rockford, IL   | Up to 15 fields (turf and grass) | \$200 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$75)*  |
| September 23-24 | Bettendorf, IA | Up to 4 fields (turf and grass)  | \$250 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$100)* |
| October 27-29   | St Louis, MO   | Up to 10 fields (turf)           | \$250 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$100)* |

### Spring Season 2024

|             |              |                                  |   |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------------------|---|
| April 27-28 | Rantoul, IL  | Up to 8 fields (turf)            | \$250 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$100)* |
| April 27-28 | Rockford, IL | Up to 15 fields (turf and grass) | \$200 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$75)*  |
| May 3-5     | St Louis, MO | Up to 10 fields (turf)           | \$250 per team (3 <sup>rd</sup> match extra \$100)* |

\*Denotes a Stay to Play weekend. We are required to use the housing companies in order to use these state of the art facilities on these weekends.

Please note that for all conference hosted event weekends (not showcases) the per team fee covers 1 or 2 matches. If teams choose to only play in one match this fee cannot be prorated. For 3<sup>rd</sup> match fee details please see above. The fees associated with these event weekends are to cover additional facility fees, staff, medical coverage, etc. These fees are in addition to your conference entry fee. The National League Regional College Showcase events are open to any and all and will be heavily promoted to college coaches. All events are optional.

## COMMUNICATION FROM/WITH THE CONFERENCE

Email is the primary means of communication within the USYS Midwest Conference. The USYS Midwest Conference compiles team contact information based on each team’s application into the conference. It is the responsibility of the team to ensure the correct coach/manager is assigned to the team’s Conference roster in GotSport at the time of the application to receive communications from the Conference. If this changes at any time contacts must be updated immediately in GotSport to ensure all opposing team contacts and the conference staff can contact your team. It is important not to opt out of GotSport communications as that will lead to team officials not receiving important league communications.

## CONTACT

Additional information will be posted, when available, on the conference home page. Documents are all subject to change so please always visit the conference website for the most up to date information and do not save documents as PDFs. For more information on the USYS Midwest Conference please visit the website or contact the League Manager, Bryan Flanagan at [bflanagan@usyouthsoccer.org](mailto:bflanagan@usyouthsoccer.org).

*Subject to change as of August 1, 2023*