



INFORMATION GUIDE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 WHAT IS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE?

4 CONFERENCES

7 PLAYOFFS

8 SHOWCASE SERIES

11 HISTORY

12 ALUMNI

13 STAY CONNECTED



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE?

The US Youth Soccer National League is comprised of three core formats of competition...

NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCES

The primary league competition features 13 regionally aligned Conferences that operate team-based and club-based leagues while providing a qualification pathway to their respective US Youth Soccer Regional Championship (NCS) and the National League Playoffs.

NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

Top National League teams will compete in the Playoffs, held alongside select Showcase Series events, to determine the National League representatives to the annual US Youth Soccer National Championships.

NATIONAL LEAGUE SHOWCASE SERIES

Provides opportunities for more teams to participate in showcases that match up similar teams from varying areas of the country in a national platform.

TOP LEAGUE COMPETITION IN US YOUTH SOCCER



NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCES

The National League features a network of Conferences that are geographically focused, under one leadership and management structure, and offer the primary league competition within the program.

Teams can earn their way into a Conference based on success in competitive league and cup competitions within each US Youth Soccer State Association – ensuring the top teams from each state have access to the National League Conferences.

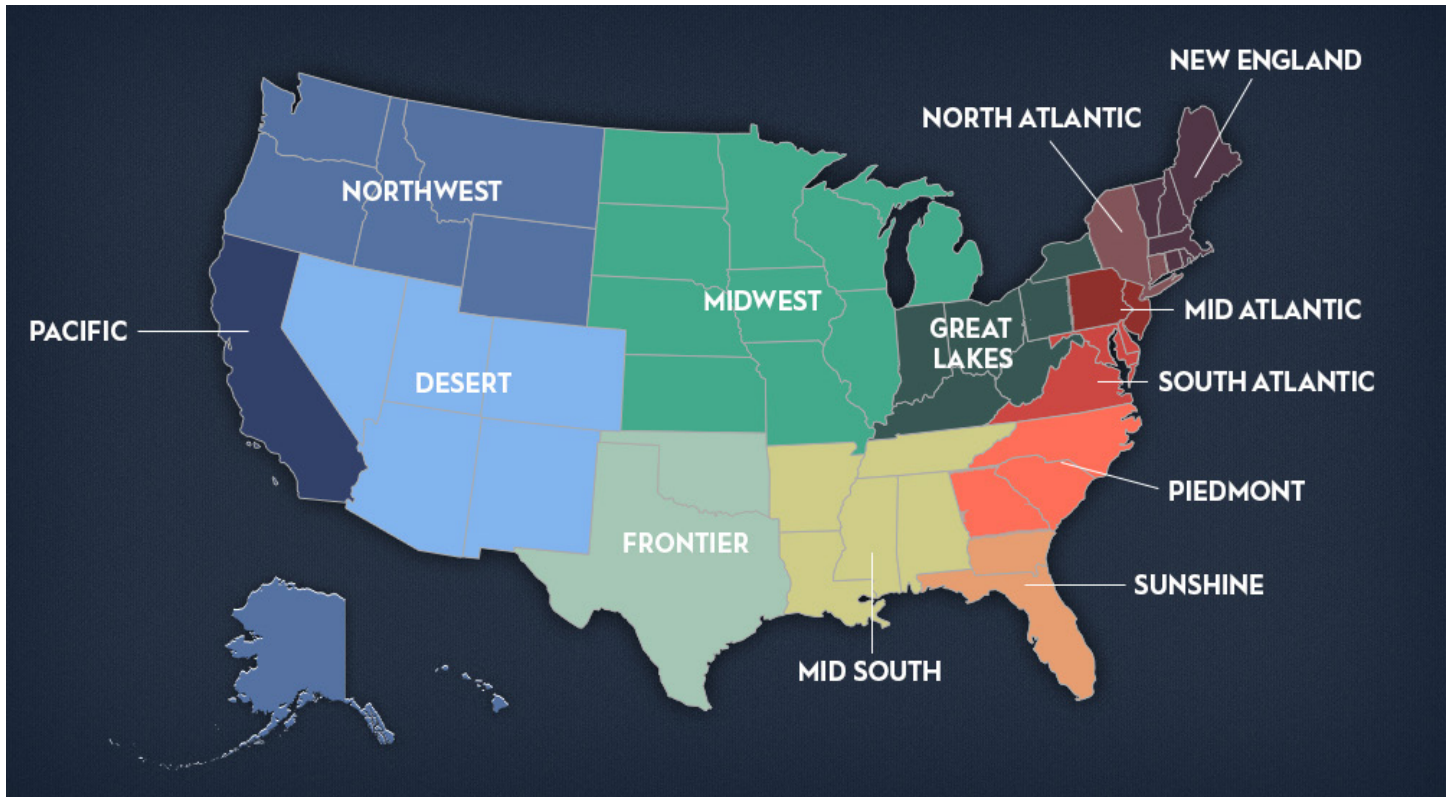
Teams that do not qualify directly for their National League Conference can apply to for consideration based on their existing resume. Application processes vary from Conference to Conference to best account for the local soccer landscape.

THIRTEEN CONFERENCES

Covering all US Youth Soccer State Associations and providing high-level league competition on a consistent basis at a targeted local level.



NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCES



13 CONFERENCES **3,600** TEAMS **80,000** PLAYERS

95 PERCENT REPRESENTATION AT NATIONALS

In the first season of the current Conference structure, 2018-2019, teams that competed in the Conferences made up more than 95 percent of the field at the USYS National Championships.



**NATIONAL
LEAGUE**



NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCES

AGE GROUPS

The National League Conferences feature competition for boys and girls club teams, with age groups ranging from 12-and-Under to 19-and-Under.

The entry age group varies from Conference to Conference, with some Conferences beginning competition with 12U teams and others beginning competition with 13U teams.

DIVISIONS

Each National League Conference features a top (Premier I) division in which teams can qualify for that season's US Youth Soccer Regional Championships and/or the next season's National League Playoffs. Conferences may also feature additional divisions with promotion and relegation within the conference from year to year.

Example of Team-Based Tiers of Divisions...

Midwest Conference: Premier I Division, Premier II Division, First Division

CLUB vs. CLUB DIVISIONS

Some Conferences may offer Club vs. Club Divisions, with such competitions operating parallel to team-based divisions at the Premier I level.



PATHWAY TO NATIONALS

Top finishers in the Premier I Divisions and Club vs. Club Divisions* of Conference play can advance to...

USYS REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The second stage of the USYS National Championship Series. Regional Champions advance to the National Championships.

NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

Teams compete to determine the National League representatives to the annual USYS National Championships.

*Club vs. Club Divisions are offered in select Conferences



NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

The National League Playoffs provide a platform for top boys and girls teams in the 14U through 19U age groups to compete to determine the National League representatives to the annual USYS National Championships.



PLAYOFFS

The Playoffs take place alongside select National League Showcase Series events – providing teams with the scout exposure of the showcase environment while allowing them to compete for advancement to the National Championships.

QUALIFYING FOR THE PLAYOFFS

Top finishers in the Conferences (highest divisions) have the opportunity to earn advancement into the following season's Playoffs.



NATIONAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

COMPETITION FORMAT

In each gender, the 14U through 19U age groups include up to 16 teams competing in the National League Playoffs. Teams are divided into brackets of four, and each team will play its three bracket opponents one time in a group play format. The team that finishes in first place in each bracket will advance to the National Championships.

If an age group has less than four brackets, the National League Director will establish the criteria for which the four National League representatives to the National Championships will be determined.



The above flowchart represents an age group with a full allotment of 16 teams broken into four brackets. Some age groups may have less teams or brackets.

NATIONAL LEAGUE SHOWCASE SERIES

The National League Showcase Series offers a unique opportunity for all National League Conference teams to have a chance to compete within a national platform. Each showcase provides diverse cross-Conference matchups against teams from differing parts of the country – testing each player to adapt to various styles of play and new challenges that arise when facing uncommon opponents.



SHOWCASE SERIES

Group alignments based on Conference performance will create opportunities for evenly-matched and competitive games, which creates an optimal environment for scouting. Given the number of competitive teams and geographic diversity, the National League Showcase Series presents an invaluable opportunity for scouts from all levels – college, professional and international, along with US Youth Soccer ODP – to evaluate a large number of players who will become future key contributors to their programs.



NATIONAL LEAGUE SHOWCASE SERIES

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

The National League Showcase Series permits 14U-19U Boys and Girls teams from all National League Conferences to apply. A limited number of spots are available to other USYS teams, as well as teams from outside organizations.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Teams interested in competing in the any one of the National League Showcase Series events can apply during a designated annual registration period. Teams will be evaluated and accepted to each showcase event, based on event availability.

SHOWCASE STRUCTURE

Each individual event will hold competitions for designated gender age groups, and teams will play three games over three days. Whenever possible, a flexible seeding system is used to match similarly performing teams from multiple Conferences against each other to increase the likelihood of competitive, evenly-matched games.



OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY AT SOME OF THE
**TOP SOCCER COMPLEXES
IN THE COUNTRY**



NATIONAL LEAGUE HISTORY

PREVIOUS STRUCTURE

The National League operated as a single nation-wide league from 2007 through 2020 – featuring the best teams from US Youth Soccer’s competitive programs.

The inaugural National League season featured 30 total boys and girls teams in the 15U and 16U age groups. The league grew to include boys and girls teams in the 14U through 19U age groups by the 2019-20 season, when it totaled 350 teams.

National League teams enjoyed tremendous success on youth soccer’s biggest stage...

National League teams captured **77 of 100** possible **US Youth Soccer National Championships** (2008-2019)

CURRENT STRUCTURE

The National League began its restructuring ahead of the 2018-19 season, when the 13 National League Conferences were formed to fall under a single leadership and operational structure.

The current structure – featuring the National League Conferences, National League Playoffs and National League Showcase Series – was implemented in 2020.



NATIONAL LEAGUE ALUMNI

In its history – from early days with just 30 teams to recent years with more than 300 teams – the National League has seen many of its players go on to star on the collegiate, professional and international levels.



JORDAN MORRIS
EASTSIDE FC (WA)

NOTABLE MALE ALUMNI

Jeremy Ebobisse

USMNT, Portland Timbers

Chase Gasper

USMNT, Minnesota United

Jack Harrison

First NL alum to play in the English Premier League

Jordan Morris

USMNT, Seattle Sounders, 2016 MLS Rookie of the Year

Gedion Zelalem

First NL alum to play in the UEFA Champions League

Walker Zimmerman

USMNT, Nashville SC

NOTABLE FEMALE ALUMNI

Danielle Colaprico

USWNT, Chicago Red Stars, 2015 NWSL Rookie of the Year

Imani Dorsey

Sky Blue FC, 2018 NWSL Rookie of the Year

Morgan Gautrat (Brian)

USWNT, Two-time World Cup Champion

Rose Lavelle

USWNT, World Cup Champion

Samantha Mewis

USWNT, World Cup Champion

Emily Sonnett

USWNT, World Cup Champion



EMILY SONNETT
NASA (GA)



STAY CONNECTED



NationalLeague@USYouthSoccer.org



[@NationalLeague](https://twitter.com/NationalLeague)



[@NationalLeagueSoccer](https://www.instagram.com/NationalLeagueSoccer)



[@NationalLeagueSoccer](https://www.facebook.com/NationalLeagueSoccer)

