

# **US Youth Soccer National League Charter**

(As of March 1, 2014)

## **PART I. GENERAL ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 101. General**

US Youth Soccer shall conduct annually a competition for its highest level of teams as provided in this charter. This competition shall be known as the "US Youth Soccer National League" (referred to in this charter as "NL").

### **Section 102. National League Committee**

There is a National League Committee (referred to in this charter as "NL Committee"). The Committee has authority for the administration of the NL as provided by this charter.

### **Section 103. Appointment of NL Committee Members**

The President of US Youth Soccer shall appoint the members of the NL Committee with the approval of the Board of Directors. The President shall appoint one of the NL Committee members as Chairperson of the NL Committee.

### **Section 104. Size of NL Committee**

The NL Committee will consist of a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 members who will represent the interest of the players, both boys and girls. A minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 members shall come from the youth soccer coaching ranks.

### **Section 105. Limitations on NL Committee Members**

No NL Committee Member can be a sitting State Association President or a member of the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors.

### **Section 106. National League Commissioner**

The President shall appoint, either as a paid employee or as an independent contractor of US Youth Soccer, a National League Commissioner (referred to in this charter as "NL Commissioner"). The Commissioner shall be responsible for the administration of the NL in accordance with this charter and the direction of the NL Committee. The Commissioner shall serve as an ex-officio member of the NL Committee.

### **Section 107. NL Committee Member Term of Office**

Each NL Committee member will serve at the pleasure of the President for a two-year term of office. Committee members may serve more than one term. In order to establish staggered terms of the Committee members, the President, when making initial appointments to the NL Committee, will specify which Committee members will serve initial one-year terms and which will serve two year terms, so that as near as possible, one-half of all Committee members shall be reappointed each year. After this rotation is established, each Committee member appointed thereafter will serve a two-year term.

## **PART II. AUTHORITY OF THE NL COMMITTEE**

### **Section 201. General Authority**

In addition to the specific powers detailed in other sections of this charter, the NL Committee is vested with all necessary power and authority to manage, regulate, supervise, administer and conduct the NL.

### **Section 202. League Rules and Procedures**

The NL Committee will have authority, subject to the provisions of this charter, to promulgate all league rules, policies and procedures reasonable and necessary for the administration and growth of the NL. All league rules, policies and procedures must be in writing and available for inspection by coaches, teams, players, parents and others.

### **Section 203. Rules, Procedures, and Policies**

Except as otherwise provided by section 308 of this charter, all proposed NL rules, procedures and policies, and amendments to them, must be in writing and must note an effective date at least 10 business days after the date it has been approved by the NL Committee. A copy of each NL rule, procedure, policy, and amendment approved by the Committee shall be distributed to each member of the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors on its approval.

### **Section 204. Support Groups and Personnel**

The NL Committee is authorized to establish various technical, advisory and other specialized support groups and designate persons on either a permanent or ad hoc basis to assist and advise the Committee in the operation of the NL.

### **Section 205. Paid Staff Positions**

In addition to the appointment of the NL Commissioner, the President may establish one or more paid NL positions and may retain persons to fill those positions either as employees or independent contractors of US Youth Soccer. From time to time, the NL Committee may make recommendations to the President about NL staffing needs and requirements.

### **Section 206. Budget**

The NL Committee, in consultation with the US Youth Soccer Executive Director, will submit a proposed annual budget in accordance with US Youth Soccer Financial Policy.

### **Section 207. Disputes, Discipline and Appeals**

The NL Committee is authorized to settle disputes which arise in the course of NL play. The NL Committee, in accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures of US Youth Soccer and U.S. Soccer, will investigate and adjudicate all allegations of misconduct by teams, coaches, players or others involved in NL operations and will impose an appropriate sanction for any violation found. When an appeal of a NL Committee decision is authorized, the appeal will be made to an Appeals Committee, appointed by the President, chaired by the US Youth Soccer Bylaws and Policies Chairperson and composed of no less than 3 nor more than 5 members, including the Chairperson.

## **PART III. OPERATION OF THE NL COMMITTEE**

### **Section 301. NL Committee Chairperson**

- (1) The Chairperson of the NL Committee will preside at NL Committee meetings, sign all contracts on behalf of the NL Committee, represent the NL Committee, and supervise the

work of the NL Commissioner. However, all contracts may be signed only with the approval of the President of US Youth Soccer, except that sponsorship contracts require the approval of the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors.

- (2) In the event of a vacancy in the NL Commissioner position, the NL Chairperson will assume general executive authority over the work of the NL Committee and the NL and will supervise the work of all NL volunteers and staff.

### **Section 302. NL Commissioner General Responsibilities**

The NL Commissioner shall be the chief executive officer of the NL. He or she will be responsible for making sure that all responsibilities assigned to the NL Committee by this charter are performed. The NL Commissioner will faithfully perform all duties detailed in his/her job description and all tasks assigned by the NL Committee.

### **Section 303. Chain of Command**

All NL volunteers, committees, staff and others accountable to the NL Committee will report to the NL Commissioner. The NL Commissioner will report to the Chairperson of the NL Committee.

### **Section 304. Job Description and Compensation**

The NL Committee shall establish a detailed job description and compensation package for the Commissioner's position, in accordance with the budget.

### **Section 305. Voting by NL Committee Members at NL Committee Meetings**

Each member of the NL Committee will have one vote on the NL Committee.

### **Section 306. Formal Meetings**

The NL Committee may meet in formal session in person or by conference call on five days notice. An agenda must be provided to NL Committee members at least 3 days before the meeting.

### **Section 307. Emergency Meetings**

The NL Committee may hold an emergency meeting with minimal notice as determined by the NL Committee Chairperson or NL Commissioner, or both. Only matters needing immediate attention may be acted upon during an emergency meeting

### **Section 308. Emergency Decisions**

The NL Committee may meet by telephone, email or in some other manner to reach agreement on some matter that must be resolved quickly. The decision will be placed on the agenda for the next formal meeting for ratification at that time. The Chairperson or his/her designee may also poll individual NL Committee members on a matter where time is of the essence and the decision is final, provided each NL Committee member was given a chance to vote on the issue.

## **PART IV. OTHER PROVISIONS**

### **Section 401. League Structure**

The following provisions apply in regard to the teams and competition of the NL:

- (1) For the 2012-2013 seasonal year, the NL will have competition in the U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18 age groups, girls and boys, and separate age group divisional play for MLS Youth Club boys teams in the U-13, U-14, and U-15 age groups. For the 2013-2014 seasonal year and thereafter, the NL will have competition in the U-13, U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-

18 age groups, girls and boys, and separate age group divisional play for MLS Youth Club boys teams in the U-13, U-14, and U-15 boys age groups.

- (2) For the 2012-2013 seasonal year, the U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18 gender age groups shall have a maximum of 16 teams accepted by the NL Committee with at least 2 teams from each region in each gender age group based on the recommendations of the Regional Directors. For the 2012-2013 seasonal year, the NL Committee shall also accept a number of MLS Youth Club boys teams for separate divisional competition in the U-13, U-14, and U-15 age groups. For the 2013-2014 seasonal year and thereafter, the U-13, U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18 gender age groups shall have a maximum of 16 teams accepted by the NL Committee with at least 2 teams from each region in each gender age group based on the recommendations of the Regional Directors. The NL Committee shall also accept a number of MLS Youth Club boys teams to compete in the U-13, U-14, and U-15 age groups. Increasing the number of teams in a gender age group above the number authorized in this paragraph (2) is subject to approval of the US Youth Soccer Board of Directors.
- (3) The top 4 teams in each gender age group from the prior seasonal year will automatically retain their team slots in the appropriate gender age group for the next seasonal year, and the balance of the teams in that gender age group will be determined by the NL Committee. Teams in the U-13 and U-14 MLS Youth Club boys age groups may return as part of the appropriate MLS Youth Club age group the following season. Teams in the U-15 MLS Youth Club boy age group will not retain a NL team slot for the next seasonal year.
- (4) Consistent with these requirements, the NL Committee will have authority to structure the NL, to divide it into various divisions, to assign teams to those divisions, to provide for the qualification of teams from regional leagues into the NL and relegation of teams out of the NL, to designate the NL seasons and team schedules, and to establish and enforce team participation eligibility rules.
- (5) The NL may not schedule games that conflict with inter-regional ODP Thanksgiving or Christmas events for gender age groups participating in those events.

#### **Section 402. State, Regional and National Championships Participation**

- (1) In order to be eligible to advance to the US Youth National Championship finals, teams in the U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18 gender age groups participating in the NL must also participate in their respective State Cup competition in the current seasonal year and the top regional league of each region should the team qualify. However, the boys teams in the MLS Youth Club U-15 age group are not required to participate in the regional league of each region, and, beginning with the 2013-2014 seasonal year and thereafter, each of those teams has the option of competing in the top regional league of its region should the team qualify.
- (2) For the National Championships finals, the top four teams in each of the U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, and U-18 gender age groups represent the National League in the National Championships finals. For the 2012-2013 seasonal year and thereafter, the top team from the MLS Youth Club U-15 boys age group will be provided one of those four places in the U-15 boys finals. If any of those teams is also a regional Cup championship team, that team will represent the National League in the finals and not represent its region in the finals. If any National League team qualifying for the finals in a gender age group is determined to be ineligible to compete in the finals, the next eligible National League team in that gender age group will present the National League in the finals in place of the ineligible team.

**Section 403. Amendment of Charter**

This charter may be amended at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Directors or the US Youth Soccer National Council.

**Section 404. Effective Date**

This charter will become effective the day after it is approved by majority vote of Board of Directors.