



# 2017 FALL SEASON TEAM INFORMATION DOCUMENT

The **MIDWEST REGIONAL LEAGUE's (MRL)** mission is to provide the highest standard of competitive play for youth teams that are members of US Youth Soccer Region II (the Midwest Region). The MRL offers quality league competition in our area as teams primarily play against teams outside of their state association. Also, teams playing in the 2017 Fall Season Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 and U-19 Premier I Divisions, vie for the chance to earn spots into the Midwest Regionals as part of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series. Teams in the 2017 Fall Season Premier I Division at Girls U-15, Girls U-16, and Girls U-17 also compete for automatic qualifying slots in the 2018-19 as the US Youth Soccer National League.

## **LEVEL OF COMMITMENT EXPECTED BY MRL TEAMS**

Any team looking to participate in the MRL must understand the level of commitment it takes to participate in a League that stretches across the Midwest. All teams understand that this is a Regional League and that teams may travel hundreds of miles to participate in MRL games. The determination of game sites is based in part due to home locations of teams within a division as well as field availability. Teams **MUST** understand that they may not play any home games. A limited number of teams are accepted. Team success in past US Youth Soccer programs helps determine qualification for participation in the MRL. The level of competition surpasses any youth team competition within a team's state association. Teams will be competing against the best US Youth Soccer affiliated teams from across the Midwest.

**MRL rules allow teams to use up to 30 players during the course of a season. There should be no reason why a team cannot field a team to play in a scheduled match as teams have the ability to use 30 players during a season. If your team chooses to roster less than the allotted number (30) it is highly recommended that the team re-evaluates its commitment to playing in the MRL. There is no greater disservice to your opponents to participate in a weekend of MRL games with minimal number of players. Teams expect opponents to field competitive teams as the expense for participation is great due to travel demands. Teams that do not fulfill their commitment to play MRL games are subject to discipline as per MRL Rule 9.04 – Discipline/Fine Schedule.**

## **AGE GROUPS OF COMPETITION**

Be sure to review the information on the MRL website in regards to US Soccer's birth year registration mandate and how this mandate affects the evolution of teams from the 2016-17 soccer calendar year to the 2017-18 soccer calendar year.

2017 Fall Season Girls competition will take place in the following age groups:

- Under-14 (2004's) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later
- Under-15 (2003's) – for players born on January 1, 2003 or later
- Under-16 (2002's) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later
- Under-17 (2001's) – for players born on January 1, 2001 or later
- Under-18 (2000's) – for players born on January 1, 2000 or later
- Under-19 (1999's) – for players born on January 1, 1999 or later

2017 Fall Season Boys competition will take place in the following age groups:

- Under-14 (2004's) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later

We will also offer a Boys Under-15 (2003's) developmental playing competition (see specific information below), as well as for Girls U-15 teams from Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio North and Ohio South.

## **ENTRY FEE**

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the MRL is \$550 per team in the Premier I and Premier II; \$500 for First Division and Qualifier Division (to the MRL) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the MRL and later drops out of the league in accordance with MRL Rule 2.15. The Team Fee does not include Referee Fees that are paid on a game-by-game basis. Team Fees are paid to your respective State Association and are to be paid to your State Association on or around June 30, 2017 as determined by your local State Association. The State Association pays Region II for all teams entered in the Fall Season. Teams do not pay entry fees directly to the MRL.

## **COMMUNICATION FROM/WITH MRL**

E-mail is the primary means of communication within the MRL. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that accurate contact information is on file with the MRL. The MRL compiles a Pre-Season Team Information Packet of Information that is now exclusively posted on its website - <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>

June 9, 2017

# **MIDWEST REGIONAL LEAGUE –2017 FALL SEASON INFORMATION**

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

The Team Application deadline is **Monday, June 26, 2017**. Contact your State Association office for the web link in order to enter the secure application website for the MRL.

Your local State Association shall review your application and solely determine if your team shall receive State Association recommendation (approval) to participate in the MRL. A maximum of eight (8) teams\* may be recommended by a state association in any one gender age group of MRL competition.

Any team at the Under-15 through Under-19 age groups making application to the MRL must have competed in one of US Youth Soccer's National Cup competitions during the past seasonal year and must participate in a US Youth Soccer National Cup competition during the current seasonal year.

Currently, the National Cup Competitions include the National Championship Series and the National Presidents Cup. There is no National Cup Competitions Requirement for the Under-14 age group. The requirement for competing in the National Cup Competitions during the past seasonal year may be waived pending a request of waiver by a team. The MRL Commissioner in consultation with the respective State Association may grant or deny the waiver.

After State Association recommendation, the MRL will review team applications and determine if your team will be accepted into the MRL for the 2017 Fall Season. In completing the application form, teams are required to submit accurate information on team accomplishments. Misrepresentation of team accomplishments may result in the team being disqualified from MRL participation.

*Note: Premier I Division and Premier II Division pre-qualified slots in the Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19 age groups were determined based on play from previous MRL seasons. Team pre-qualified slots are reserved a slot, but are not automatically entered—that is, the teams must apply via our on-line system. If your team is listed as a Premier I Division or Premier II Division team you must apply by the June 26<sup>th</sup> deadline. All Premier I Division and Premier II Division teams are also subject to review as per MRL Rules. The MRL has established a procedure to fill Premier I Division and Premier II Division slots (the 2017 Fall Season Team Selection and Division Placement Criteria document).*

*\*-this number may be increased by the time that final selections are made.*

## **SELECTION AND PLACEMENT**

There is a two-step approval process for the MRL. First, each team must be endorsed by its respective State Association. Second, the MRL Technical Committee shall determine the final selection and placement of all teams. Accepted teams shall be notified via website posting or an e-mail regarding their acceptance and placement into specific tiers and divisions within the MRL. **The list of teams accepted with division placement into the MRL for the 2017 Fall Season is expected to be posted on our website on or around July 13, 2017 (this date may change—check MRL website for updates).**

## **REFEREES**

The three-man system shall be used for all games. Each team is responsible for one-half of the total referee fees per game and payment is to be made in cash prior to each game. Referee fees are as follows:

U-14: \$60 per game per team; a total of \$120 (\$50 to Referee and \$35 to each AR)

U-15 and U-16: \$70 per game per team; a total of \$140 (\$60 to Referee and \$40 to each AR)

U-17, U-18 and U19/20: \$80 per game per team; a total of \$160 (\$70 to Referee and \$45 to each AR)

## **TEAM ROSTERS**

Teams may utilize 30 players during the course of a season in accordance with Team Roster and Team Club Pass Player Roster rules. A maximum 22-player Team Roster with a “floating” Team 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. See MRL Rules and the MRL Team Roster and Player Guide for further information.

## **MRL RULES AND INFORMATION**

Additional information on the MRL is available on the league website: <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>. Any questions can be directed to Tom Frisbie, MRL Commissioner.

## **COACHES—LICENSING REQUIREMENT**

The following is the rule that is in place for the 2017-18 soccer year including the 2017 Fall Season:

***All coaches on the team bench coaching in a MRL game must have at the minimum a US Soccer “D” Coaching License or equivalent earned prior to the 2017-18 season as determined by MRL (i.e. minimum NSCAA National Diploma)***

***(There is no requirement for a coach on a team roster holding a minimum a US Soccer National “C” Coaching License or equivalent).***

## **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 MRL play.

## **COMPETITION FORMAT**

All competitions in every age group and subdivision shall be round robin in nature (except Development play—see separate section below). There will be no end of season playoffs to determine Regional Wild Cards or teams that earn promotion into the Premier I or Premier II tiers. Based on the number of teams placed into subdivisions, teams may play up to a total of 11 MRL games during the course of the Fall Season (each team will be scheduled for a minimum of five MRL games—as of August 1, 2017). **Please be aware of the number of games that teams will be required to play. MRL teams are required to fulfill their commitment by playing out their entire MRL schedule of games.** The MRL Commission shall determine if a penalty is imposed for failure to fulfill a team’s schedule.

--In the Fall of 2017, the entry age group for the MRL is at the Boys and Girls U-14 age group, the MRL 2017 Fall Season will conduct a 32-team Premier Division Qualification competition along with First Division competition for all other teams. More information is posted on the MRL website.

**The U-13 age group will begin play in the Spring of 2018. Further details will be communicated later on the application process. U-13 teams should not apply now.**

--In the Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19 age groups, the Premier I Division and Premier II Division teams are determined based on previous season performance (i.e. promotion/relegation). A list of teams who have earned Premier I Division and Premier II Division slots for the 2017 Fall Season is posted at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/mrl/>. The MRL, in conjunction with respective state associations, will review team applications in accordance with its Policy on Returning MRL Teams.

## **LOCATION OF GAMES--HOSTING MRL GAMES**

There are three categories for hosting MRL games:

--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, the teams may share costs (usually for games played at a neutral location).

--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

--MRL Hosting—MRL hosts games at a multiple field location. There are no field costs to the teams for playing matches at MRL hosted weekend sites. The MRL hosted weekends for the 2017 Fall Season are Rockford IL (Sportscore Two -- 6 synthetic fields and grass fields) on September 9-10 and 16-17; St Louis MO (Lou Fusz Soccer Complex-8 synthetic fields) on September 16-17; Muscatine IA (Muscatine Soccer Complex-6-8 grass fields) on September 23-24; Westfield IN (Grand Park—7 synthetic fields and grass fields) on September 23-24 and Overland Park KS (Overland Park Soccer Complex—3-12 all-weather turf fields) on September 30-October 1. Additional sites may be added.

### **MUST BE AVAILABLE TO PLAY WEEKENDS**

The four 2017 Fall Season **Must Be Available to Play** weekends are on September 9-10, September 16-17, September 23-24 and September 30 - October 1. Teams are excused from MRL play on these weekends due to 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 MRL games on other weekends during the Fall Season. A team's requirement to be available to play on these MRL weekends ceases once the division schedule is agreed to by the teams. The purpose of the Must Be Available to Play Weekends is to insure common play dates. MRL allows flexibility in scheduling providing all teams in a division agree to scheduling flexibility.

### **MANDATORY PREMIER I AND II EVENT OR GIRLS U-15, U-16, U-17, AND U-18**

Our second **Fall Season Girls MRL College Showcase Event** will be held at Sportscore II in Rockford IL on Saturday thru Monday, October 7-9, 2017. This event is open only to Premier I and Premier II team in the Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 age groups and participation by teams in these tiers is required.

Teams will be required to play one MRL match on Saturday and one MRL match on Sunday. Scheduling two matches in a day will not be permitted and playing a third MRL match on Monday is optional. More information will be available to teams during the MRL Scheduling process.

An additional per team fee of no more than \$350 per team will be charged to cover costs associated with this Showcase event which will be payable by teams after the Premier I and II tiers in each age group are finalized..

### **THE 2017 FALL SEASON – START AND END DATES**

Fall Season play may begin on August 11, 2017. All MRL play must be completed on or before November 26, 2017 (subject to change).

### **BOYS and GIRLS UNDER-15 AGE GROUP (2003'S)—Development Play**

With the birth year age group mandate, the MRL will offer development play for the Boys U-15 age group, as well as for Girls Under-15 teams from Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio North and Ohio South.

Teams interested in this competition which will not involve promotion or relegation but rather creating a competition platform for 2002 players in 8<sup>th</sup> grade while their 9<sup>th</sup> grade teammates are participating in high school soccer. Teams interested in this competition should complete an application for the Fall Season, Your team representatives will receive a questionnaire from the MRL (around June 30) requesting specific information on your team and your desires for matches in this type of format. Know that this program will evolve based on the needs of teams.

### **GENERAL SCHEDULING INFORMATION**

**Premier I Divisions and Premier II Divisions at Girls U-15, U-16, U-17, U-18 and U-19**— On or about July 13, 2017 after the placement of teams into tiers and subdivisions, teams will be provided with information on the MRL scheduling process through a group email sent to each Team's Coach and Club Director of Coaching of teams. The MRL provides the opportunity for teams to schedule all games in a division in accordance with MRL procedures. All teams in a subdivision must agree to the entire schedule by no later than Monday, August 1, 2017. Availability of fields at MRL hosted sites is limited and will be provided to teams on a first completely approved scheduled, first served basis. A Scheduling Coordinator (SC) who will be appointed by the MRL from within each division to assist in the process. **Our hope is**

**that only Club Directors of Coaching, the Head Coach of a participating team within the division, or a Full-time Club Administrator will be selected as the SC.** Generally, this person will be someone who has scheduled MRL games in the past and understands the nuances in scheduling on a regional basis. Schedules not completed by August 1 may result in fines assessed against teams as well as the MRL scheduling the division with no regard for any team's availability. MRL may schedule such games at MRL sites and teams should expect to play one game per day with Saturday kickoffs as early as 7:00 am and Sunday kick offs no later than 2:00 pm.

**First Divisions in all Age Groups and Boys and Girls Under-14 Premier Division Qualification groups**— On or about July 16, 2017 after the placement of teams into tiers and subdivisions, teams will be provided with information on the MRL scheduling process through a group email sent to each Team's Coach and Club Director of Coaching of teams. The MRL provides the opportunity for teams to schedule all games in a division in accordance with MRL procedures. All teams in a subdivision must agree to the entire schedule by no later than Thursday, August 3, 2017. Availability of fields at MRL hosted sites is limited and will be provided to teams on a first completely approved scheduled, first served basis. A Scheduling Coordinator (SC) who will be appointed by the MRL from within each division to assist in the process. **Our hope is that only Club Directors of Coaching, the Head Coach of a participating team within the division, or a Full-time Club Administrator will be selected as the SC.** Generally, this person will be someone who has scheduled MRL games in the past and understands the nuances in scheduling on a regional basis. Schedules not completed by August 3 may result in fines assessed against teams as well as the MRL scheduling the division with no regard for any team's availability. MRL may schedule such games at MRL sites and teams should expect to play one game per day with Saturday kickoffs as early as 7:00 am and Sunday kick offs no later than 2:00 pm.

--Teams should understand that due to the nature of scheduling of games for teams from across the region that **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 MRL weekends and the MRL, as well as the other teams within a division, are under no obligation to assist these coaches with their conflicts.

--MRL games may be scheduled during other US Youth Soccer sanctioned competitions during the Fall Season weekends, but must be played under MRL rules and approved by the MRL Commissioner. Teams and host organization will be held responsible for MRL rules compliance in these situations.

--Once schedules are developed, schedule changes are permitted in accordance with MRL Scheduling Policy.

All information in this document is subject to change at the discretion of the MRL