



2020-21 SEASON GENERAL TEAM INFORMATION

WHAT IS THE US YOUTH SOCCER NATIONAL LEAGUE?

The US Youth Soccer National League is debuting a new structure for the 2020-21 season. The primary competition takes place at the multi-state level within the network of 13 regionally-aligned conferences across the country. The national platform that ties together the Conferences is the National League Showcase Series, which will provide opportunities for more teams to participate in showcases that match up similar teams from varying areas of the country.

The **Great Lakes Conference** is one of 13 conferences that fall under the scope of the National League and operate at a multi-state level — providing high-level competition on a consistent basis at a targeted local level (New York West, Pennsylvania West, West Virginia, Ohio North, Ohio South, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Kentucky).

The **Great Lakes Conference's** top divisions (both team-based and club-based) offer its teams an opportunity to qualify for the 2021 US Youth Soccer Midwest Regional Championships, which are held annually each summer. All teams within the **Great Lakes Conference** also have the opportunity to take part in the National League Showcase Series, 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.

NATIONAL LEAGUE PATHWAY



COMMITMENT

Any team looking to participate in the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference must understand the level of commitment it takes to participate in a League that stretches across 9 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 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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 2020-21 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference will include the following Boys and Girls age groups:

- 13 and Under (13U) – for players born on January 1, 2008 or later
- 14 and Under (14U) – for players born on January 1, 2007 or later
- 15 and Under (15U) – for players born on January 1, 2006 or later
- 16 and Under (16U) – for players born on January 1, 2005 or later
- 17 and Under (17U) – for players born on January 1, 2004 or later
- 18 and Under (18U) – for players born on January 1, 2003 or later
- 19 and Under (19U) – for players born on January 1, 2002 or later*

*For all competitions within the National League (including the National League Conferences, the National League Showcase Series and the National League Playoffs), the oldest age group FOR THE 2020-21 SEASONAL YEAR ONLY will be 19/20-U. Eligible players' must be born on or after Jan. 1, 2001. This one-year change is in place to allow players to participate in their final year of National League eligibility that they would have otherwise missed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ENTRY FEE

The Team Entry Fee to participate in the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference is \$650 per team, per season (paid to US Youth Soccer through your GotSport account at the time of application) and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the conference and later drops out. State Association's may have a higher fee to cover additional costs associated with the conference. 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 for their additional added fees. 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

US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference boundaries are for youth teams that are members of US Youth Soccer State Associations of Michigan, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio North, Ohio South, Kentucky, New York West, Pennsylvania West and West Virginia, although teams from outside these areas may also apply to participate. B13U-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 from the lowest tier. G15U through G19U teams from Michigan will play in the Midwest Conference in the fall due to conflicts with HS teams in the Great Lakes Conference. G15U through G19U from Indiana will play in the Great Lakes Conference in the spring due to conflicts with HS teams in the Midwest Conference. For Minnesota, G13U and G14U are expected to play in the Midwest Conference, while at G15U through G19U are expected to play in the Great Lakes Conference in the spring due to their high school soccer season conflicts in the fall season. Teams from PA West, NY West and West Virginia are encouraged to participate in the Great Lakes Conference, but may choose to play in one of the US Youth Soccer National Leagues North Atlantic, Mid Atlantic or South Atlantic EDP Conferences, with written consent from the League Manager.

SEASONS OF PLAY

2020 FALL SEASON

Boys and Girls 14U competitions. The 14U competition during the 2020 Fall Season will feature Premier I, Premier II, and First Division tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the tiers to determine the 2020 Spring Season placement of teams into tiers.

Boys and Girls 15U Developmental Competition. This age group generally features 8th and 9th graders. We will offer development play for the 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 2006 that are in 8th grade while their 9th grade teammates are participating in high school soccer.

2021 SPRING SEASON

Boys and Girls 13U and 14U competitions. The 13U competition during the 2021 Season will feature Premier I, Premier II, and First Division tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the tiers for the following soccer season. As the 13U's is the entry age group for the Conferences, the State Associations at the time of the team application period will rank teams for admission into the Conferences and team placement into tiers. The 14U competition during the 2021 Spring Season will feature Premier I, Premier II, and First Division tiers of play (primarily based on the results of the 2020 Fall Season of 14U play) with promotion and relegation between the tiers for the following soccer year.

Boys 15U through 19U competitions. Due to avoiding conflicts with high school soccer, the Great Lakes Conference will offer its 15U through 19U competition during the 2021 Spring Season. Boy's competitions in these age groups during the 2021 Spring Season will feature Club vs Club, Premier I, Premier II, and First Division tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the Premier and First Division tiers for the following soccer year.

Girls 15U through 19U competitions. Due to avoiding conflicts with high school soccer, the Great Lakes Conference will offer its 15U through 19U competition during the 2021 Spring Season. Girl's competitions in these age groups during the 2021 Spring Season will feature Club vs Club, Premier I, Premier II, and First Division tiers of play with promotion and relegation between the Premier and First Division tiers for the following soccer year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- The Team Application period to participate in the 2020 Fall Season 14U (boys and Girls) and Developmental 15U (boys and girls) will **open on or around June 5, 2020 and close on July 5, 2020.**
- The Team Application period to participate in the 2021 Spring Season 15U through 19U (Boys and Girls) age groups will **open on or around July 24, 2020 and close on August 28, 2020.**
- The Team Application period to participate in the 2021 Spring Season 13U and 14U (Boys and Girls) age groups will **open on or around October 12, 2020 and close on November 9, 2020.**

Note: Club vs Club competition applications are considered prior to the Team vs Team application windows opening. All Club vs Club teams must still apply through GotSport within the dates listed above.

Contact your State Association office for the web link to register through GotSport; **we do not list the application link on the conference website.** Following your application, US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference will send your team information to your State Association so they may review and endorse the application. After State Association endorsement, the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference Selection Committee will review team applications and determine acceptance into the conference. In completing any application into the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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.

SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

There is a two-step approval process for the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference. First, each team must be endorsed by its respective State Association. Second, the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference selection committee shall review and determine the final selection of all teams. Accepted teams shall be notified via a website posting or an e-mail regarding their acceptance and placement into the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference. Club vs Club, Premier I and Premier II level slots earned under the 2019-20 Great Lakes Conference season will be honored within a team's respective Conference in 2020-21. Pre-qualified teams for Premier I and Premier II for the 2020-21 will be posted on the conference website and can be seen in the Team Information drop down. State endorsed team applications received from clubs returning from other leagues such as the Development Academy will be reviewed on a case by case basis for suitable introduction to the conference at the discretion of the selection committee and the league manager.

REFEREES

US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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 prior to each game as follows:

13U and 14U:	\$70 per game per team; a total of \$140 (\$60 to Referee and \$40 to each AR)
15U and 16U:	\$80 per game per team; a total of \$160 (\$70 to Referee and \$45 to each AR)
17U, 18U and 19U:	\$90 per game per team; a total of \$180 (\$80 to Referee and \$50 to each AR)

TEAM ROSTERS

Teams may utilize 30 players during the course of a season in accordance with League Rules and Policies. 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 rosters shall be submitted to the league through the GotSport platform.

RULES AND INFORMATION

Rules and additional information on the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference may be found on the Great Lakes Conference website at: <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/great-lakes-conference/>

COACHING EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Coaches of teams within the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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 2020-21 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 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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 for Club vs Club). Based on the number of teams placed into subdivisions, teams may play up to a total of 9 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference games during the course of the season. Please be aware of the number of games that teams will be required to play. US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference teams are required to fulfill their commitment by playing out their entire conference schedule of games.

ADVANCEMENT TO REGIONALS

The top team (non state cup champion) from each age group and gender competing in the top tier (Club vs Club and/or Premier I) of the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference may qualify for 2021 Midwest Regional Championships in the same seasonal year as the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference. To remain qualified for Regionals, a team must also play in their state association's State Cup competition. Please note that 14U Regionals 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 2020-21 NATIONAL LEAGUE SHOWCASE SERIES

Teams placed in the top tier of the Conference in the Club vs Club division or Premier I will have opportunities to compete within a national platform at National League Showcase Series events nationally. Teams from Premier II and First Divisions may also have this opportunity based upon an application process to these individual events. Teams will be placed in brackets with similarly performing teams across conferences. Alignments based on conference performance will create opportunities for evenly matched competitive games.

NATIONAL LEAGUE SHOWCASE SERIES REQUIREMENT

Teams understand that all 14U-18U teams competing in a top tier (Club vs Club or Premier I) within the USYS National League Great Lakes Conference during the 2020-2021 season must attend a minimum of one (1) USYS National League Showcase Series event to retain their position in the top tier (Club vs Club or Premier I) of the 2021-2022 USYS National League Great Lakes Conference or any other USYS National League Conference.

LOCATION OF GAMES - HOSTING

There are three categories for hosting US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference games:

US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference Hosting. US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference hosts games at a multiple field location. There will be additional costs to the teams for playing matches at US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference hosted weekend sites, to cover the additional fee's required for facility costs and safely staffing these events. The US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference hosted weekends for the 2020 Fall Season and the 2021 Spring Season will be posted on the Great Lakes 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 2020 Fall Season are, September 12-13, September 19-20, September 26-27 & October 3-4. Teams are only excused from US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference 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 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference games on other weekends during the Fall Season. A team's requirement to be available to play on these US Youth Soccer Great Lakes 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 insure common play dates. US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference allows flexibility in scheduling providing all teams in a division agree to scheduling flexibility. Must be available to play dates in spring 2021 are, April 17-18, April 24-25, May 1-2 and May 8-9.

SPRING SEASON MANDATORY PI AND PII EVENT FOR B15U-B19U and G15U-G19U

There will be a mandatory US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference College Showcase Event held at Grand Park, Westfield, IN on May 7-9, 2021. We have secured the entire complex for the event. This showcase event is open only to PI and PII teams in the Boys and Girls 15U-19U age groups and participation by teams in these tiers is required. Teams will be required to play one US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference match on Saturday and one US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference match on Sunday. Scheduling two matches in a day will not be permitted and playing a third US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference match on Friday is optional. More information will be available to teams during the scheduling process. An additional per team fee of \$250 per team (one or two matches) will be charged to cover costs associated with this Showcase event which will be payable by all teams after the tiers in each age group are finalized (additional Friday game will be \$100 extra). The fee may be paid online on your GotSport account or can be collected at the event. Club vs Club matches may be played at this event pending Club availability.

GENERAL SCHEDULING INFORMATION

For full scheduling information, please refer to the Conference Operating Procedures (COPs). Detailed scheduling information can be found in the COPs and all teams are required to read this information prior to applying to the conference. Conference schedules will be overseen by the League Manager, who will have sole discretion in the manner by which game schedules are developed. There will be MANDATORY scheduling meetings in the following age groups for all Divisions, Premier I and Premier II and ALL First Division teams for both the 2020 Fall and 2021 Spring Seasons:

July 27, 2020	2020 Fall Premier I and II Mandatory Scheduling Meeting Location/Process TBD (14U)*
July 27, 2020	2020 Fall First Division Mandatory Scheduling Meeting Location/Process TBD (14U)*
Dec 7, 2020	2021 Spring Premier I and II Mandatory Scheduling Meeting (13U through 19U)**
Dec 8, 2020	2021 Spring First Division Mandatory Scheduling Meeting (13U through 19U)**

****IMPORTANT: Final decisions on scheduling meeting locations/processes TBD based on Covid-19 guidelines. This document is subject to change pending final decision on scheduling procedures. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to safely host in person meetings for the fall season, so full online scheduling information and polices will be sent to all teams at such time following the application period.***

*****Final Location TBD prior to spring registration opening***

Teams participating in the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference must be available to play on the published conference dates. By submitting your team application, your team is committing to play on the published dates for the conference.

Club vs Club upon acceptance into Club vs Club division clubs will provide availability sheets to the league manager. The league manager will create the schedule in cooperation with the Club Leaders Committee.

Premier I, Premier II & All First Divisions. After the placement of teams into tiers and subdivisions, teams will be provided with information on the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference scheduling process, including details of the mandatory scheduling meeting*, details will be posted on the Conference website. The US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference provides the opportunity for teams to schedule all games in a division in accordance with US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference. All teams in a subdivision must agree to the entire schedule. Availability of fields at US Youth Soccer Great

Lakes Conference hosted sites is limited and will be provided to teams on a first completely approved scheduled, first served basis.

**Final decisions on scheduling meeting locations/processes TBD based on Covid-19 guidelines*

Teams should understand that due to the nature of scheduling of games for teams from across multiple states 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 US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference weekends and the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference, as well as the other teams within a division, are under no obligation to assist these coaches with their conflicts.

Once schedules are developed, schedule changes are permitted in accordance with US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference Scheduling Policy.

CONFERENCE HOSTED WEEKENDS

Conference hosted weekend will take place on the following weekends:

Fall Season 2020

September 26-27 Westfield, IN Up to 20 fields (turf and grass) \$200 per (3rd match an extra \$100)*

Spring Season 2021

May 7-9 Westfield, IN Spring College Showcase \$250 per team (3rd match an 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.

Additional Spring events may be added before the December scheduling meetings if suitable facilities can be found

Please note that for all event weekends the per team fee covers 1 or 2 matches. If teams choose to only play in one match this fee cannot be prorated. For 3rd match fee details please see above. The fee's associated with these event weekends are to cover additional facility fees, staff, medical coverage etc. These fees are in addition to your conference team fee. The college showcase events are the only mandatory events as listed previously in this document. All other events are optional, but you accept the fee's if you schedule matches on any of these weekends.

COMMUNICATION FROM/WITH THE CONFERENCE

Email is the primary means of communication within the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference. It is the responsibility of each team to ensure that accurate contact information is on file with the conference at the time of application. The US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference compiles team contact information based on each team's application into the conference.

CONTACT

Additional information will be posted, when available, on the following web page <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/great-lakes-conference/> For more information on the US Youth Soccer Great Lakes Conference please visit the website or contact the League Manager, Marc Frankland at mfrankland@usyouthsoccer.org

Subject to change as of July 16, 2020