



## STATE CUP PROGRAM CHANGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARYLAND TEAMS

MSYSA is excited to announce important changes to the Cup program that aim to increase participation and create more opportunities for youth soccer teams across the state. These updates address evolving soccer landscapes, scheduling changes, and continuing to meet the needs of our member clubs and families.

With this year's changes, MSYSA looks forward to providing greater flexibility, reduced costs, and new pathways for teams to compete at the state, and national levels.

### State Cup: Updated Format and Structure

#### Single Elimination Format

- Both the President's Cup and State Cup will now feature a single elimination format for all rounds.
- This change eliminates the \$1200 cost burden of field and referee fees tied to the round robin quarterfinal stage. Games will be played only on Sundays in the spring, freeing Saturdays for league play and reducing scheduling conflicts.

## **Elimination of Regional Tournament**

- NCS/US Youth Soccer has eliminated the regional tournament for State Cup winners.
- Maryland State Cup champions will now advance directly to the National Championships.

## **Two State Cup Competitions: Winter & Spring**

- Teams can now choose between a Winter Competition or a Spring Competition.
- Both winners will be recognized as State Champions.
- The Winter and Spring champions will face off May 30-31 to determine Maryland's national berth.

### **Winter Competition (13U–19U Boys & Girls)**

- Runs January–early March.
- Requires at least two teams per age group to proceed.
- Teams self-assign matches, allowing flexibility for weekday play. Key completion dates: Round of 16: Jan 24
  - Quarterfinals: Feb 7
  - Semifinals: Feb 21
  - Finals: Mar 7

### **Spring Competition (11U–19U Boys & Girls)**

- Normal competition window: April–May.
- Matches played only on Sundays.
- Key dates:
  - Round of 16: Apr 12, 19, 26
  - Quarterfinals: May 3
  - Semifinals: May 10
  - Finals: May 17

**Rules: Teams may only participate in one competition (winter or spring).**



# National Championship Pathway

## Direct Advancement

- Maryland State Cup champions automatically qualify for the National Championships. This opens opportunities for teams that previously did not advance beyond regionals.

## National Championship Details

- Girls Teams (Murfreesboro & Smyrna, TN)
  - 16U–19U: July 13–20
  - 13U–15U: July 16–23
- Boys Teams (Salt Lake City & Provo, UT)
  - 16U–19U: July 13–20
  - 13U–15U: July 16–23
- Teams should plan for a 7-day stay (preliminary games, rest days, quarterfinals, semifinals, finals).

## Maryland's Super Group Status

- Maryland teams (boys & girls) will compete in the Super Group, the top tier at Nationals.
- Placement was determined by strong results over the past three years.

Maryland joins Eastern New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, and New Jersey as the only East Region states in the Super Group.

## National League Qualifiers

- Teams qualifying through National League must also compete in State Cup to be eligible for Nationals.



## **Future Scheduling**

- The national committee is reviewing the possibility of moving the National Championship earlier in the summer.

## **New U11 & U12 National Invitational Tournament**

MSYSA is proud to announce a new National Invitational for U11 and U12 Cup Champions, hosted in Maryland on June 27–28.

## **Format & Benefits**

- Two-day, weekend-only event (no missed school).
- Teams grouped in Super Group-style format.
- Each team plays 3 preliminary games before the championship match. Local hosting reduces travel and hotel costs for Maryland families.

## **Eligibility**

- 11U & 12U State Cup winners advance automatically.





## President's Cup Updates

- President's Cup will remain a spring-only, single elimination competition held
- on Sundays. Continues to grow with ~20 new teams annually.
- Designed for Division 2 EDP teams and below (Division 1 EDP teams must
- enter State Cup). Finals: May 24 weekend (aligned with State Cup Finals).

## Regional Competition

- Winners advance to Regionals in Loudoun, VA (June 7–11).
- Convenient travel, teams can commute without hotel
- stays. Region includes teams from DE, MD, VA, WV, NC, KY, TN.

## National Advancement

- Top regional team winners will advance to Nationals in Wichita, KS (July 7–11).