



2010 SPRING SEASON

GENERAL INFORMATION

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) and to assure the continued growth and development of elite level players. All of us associated with the MRL strive to provide the absolute best high-level competitive environment for our teams. The MRL offers the absolute best league competition in our area as teams vie for the chance to earn spots into the Midwest Regionals as part of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series.

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 must 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 understand that they may not play any home games. A limited number of teams are accepted. Team success, with special emphasis on State Cup and Regionals competition results, 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 25 players during the course of a season. If your team chooses to roster less than the allotted number (25) 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.

AGE GROUPS OF COMPETITION

In the 2010 Spring Season, Premier and First Division competition in the following Boys and Girls age groups will be conducted:

Under 14: born on August 1, 1995 or later

Under 15: born on August 1, 1994 or later

Under 16: born on August 1, 1993 or later

Under 17: born on August 1, 1992 or later

Under 18: born on August 1, 1991 or later

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The Team Application deadline is **Friday, November 6, 2009 at 5 pm ET**. Contact your State Association office for your State Code in order to enter the secure application website at www.MidwestRegionalLeague.com. 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. Your State Association has the authority to establish criteria to determine the teams it endorses for the MRL. A maximum of eight (8) teams may be recommended by a state association in any one gender age group of MRL competition. Teams participating in the MRL must have competed in their state association's State Cup during the previous year (2008-09). Only after State Association recommendation, will the MRL review the application and determine if your team shall be accepted into the MRL for the 2010 Spring 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 Division slots in all age groups were determined based on play from previous MRL seasons. Teams that are reserved a slot, are not automatically entered—that is, the teams must apply via our on-line system. If your team is listed as a Premier Division team be sure to apply by the November 6th deadline. All Premier teams are also subject to review as per MRL Rule 4.06. In situations where teams that do not return to claim their Premier Division slots or are relegated as per Rule 4.06. The MRL has established a procedure to fill Premier Division slots (see 2010 Spring Season Team Selection and Division Placement Criteria document).

ENTRY FEE

The Entry Fee to the MRL is \$350 per team and is non-refundable if a team is accepted into the MRL and later drops out of the league. 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 November 6, 2009 as determined by your local State Association. The State Association pays Region II for all teams entered in the Spring Season. Teams do not pay entry fees directly to the MRL.

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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. Teams shall be notified via e-mail regarding their acceptance and placement into specific divisions within the MRL. **The list of teams accepted into the MRL for the 2010 Spring Season is expected to be posted on our website on or around November 30, although final division assignments may not be made until around December 15.** Premier Division Teams are determined based on previous season performance (i.e. promotion/relegation). A list of teams who have earned Premier Division slots for the 2010 Spring Season is posted at www.MidwestRegionallLeague.com. The MRL, in conjunction with respective state associations, will review team applications from slotted Premier Division teams in order to confirm their team composition (MRL Rule 4.02 and MRL Policy in regards to "Ownership" of Premier Division slots).

COMMUNICATION FROM/WITH MRL

E-mail will be 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 - www.MidwestRegionallLeague.com – for download. The MRL no longer mails the pre-season packet to its teams.

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:

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|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Under 14: | \$50 per game per team; |
| Under 15 and Under 16: | \$60 per game per team; |
| Under 17 and Under 18: | \$70 per game per team. |

TEAM ROSTERS

Teams may utilize 25 players during the course of a season in accordance with Team Roster and Team Guest Player Roster rules. A maximum 22-player Team Roster with a "floating" maximum of 3 to 7-player Team Guest Roster shall be utilized for the Under 16, 17 and 18 Age Groups. For the Under 14 and 15 Age Groups, an 18-player Team Roster and a maximum 7-player Team Guest Player Roster are permitted. Guest players may only come from within a team's club, provided that the player is a US Youth Soccer member. See MRL Rules for further information.

MRL RULES AND INFORMATION

Additional information on the MRL is available on the league website: www.MidwestRegionallLeague.com. Click on the "Administration" tab for the MRL Charter, Rules and Policies. Any questions can be directed to Paul Luchowski at MRLCommissioner@Region2.com

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 sub-division shall be round robin in nature. There will be no end of season playoffs to determine Regional Wild Cards or teams that earn promotion into the Premier Division. Based on the number of teams placed into divisions, teams may play up to a total of 11 MRL games during the course of the Spring Season (each team will be scheduled for a minimum of six MRL games). **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 the penalty for failure to fulfill a team's schedule.

LOCATION OF GAMES--HOSTING MRL GAMES

In addition to sites secured and hosted by the MRL (MRL hosted sites to be available on April 17-18, April 24-25 and May 1-2), teams are offered the opportunity to host their division games at their home sites. To qualify, a team must submit an APPLICATION TO HOST MULTIPLE MRL GAMES, which can be downloaded from the MRL website on or around November 1. Multiple field locations are preferred as well as sites that can provide backup fields. The use of Artificial Turf fields is permitted. The MRL shall review applications and have the sole authority in determining if a team shall host MRL games at their proposed site.

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SCHEDULING and MUST BE AVAILABLE TO PLAY WEEKENDS

Spring Season play may begin on March 5, 2010. Premier Division competition must be completed on or before May 30, 2010. First Division competition (excluding the Playoffs) must be completed on or before June 13, 2009. See additional information on scheduling under Boys and Girls Age Group Information.

The MRL Commission has determined that all teams Must Be Available to Play on the following weekends:

Saturday and Sunday, April 17 and 18

Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25

Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2

Teams that are competing in their State Cup competitions on these dates and are not available for MRL play on such dates must be available to play MRL games on two additional weekends in April (April 3-4 and 10-11). It is the responsibility of teams affected by their State Cup competitions on Must Be Available to Play Weekends to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the spring.

Specific information on scheduling for the two levels of competition within the MRL includes:

Premier Divisions: A mandatory Scheduling Meeting for all 2009 Spring Season Premier Division teams will take place on Saturday, December 19, 2009 at the Indianapolis (IN) Hilton North. Teams will be provided the opportunity to finalize their schedules, face-to-face, with other teams within their division. Information on the meeting will be distributed to teams once they are formally accepted into the MRL (around November 30) with availability information due to the MRL by no later than December 15. When providing availability information, teams will be listed as available to play on the Must Be Available to Play weekends to insure that all game match-ups can be scheduled (except due to State Cup conflicts). Teams that are competing in their State Cup competitions on these dates will not need to be available for MRL play on such dates but must be also be available to play on April 3-4 and 10-11. It is the responsibility of teams affected by their State Cup competitions on Must Be Available to Play Weekends to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the spring. As in the past, if all teams within a specific division are able to pre-schedule all games and agree completely with the schedule prior to Thursday, December 17, 2009, 5:00 pm ET, then the face-to-face meeting for such division will be cancelled.

First Divisions: The MRL may have face-to-face scheduling meetings for the First Division. The process for First Division Scheduling will be determined on or around November 30 following the acceptance of teams into the MRL. Those First Division teams based in Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio (as well as all Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 First Divisions) should expect that the scheduling meeting for their First Division competitions will take place in Indianapolis on December 19 (although this may not be finalized until November 30). First Division teams will be required to submit weekend playing availability to the MRL by no later than December 15. On weekends where multiple teams are playing at one site, teams should expect to play three games in a weekend (two games on Saturday and one game on Sunday except for the U17 age group where due to SAT testing on May 1, expect to play one game on Saturday and two on Sunday). **Teams must be available to play on the designated Must Be Available to Play Weekends**, although the schedule may not require teams to participate on each of these weekends. Teams that are competing in their State Cup competitions on these dates will not need to be available for MRL play on such dates but must also be available to play on April 3-4 and 10-11. It is the responsibility of teams affected by their State Cup competitions on Must Be Available to Play Weekends to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the spring.

GENERAL SCHEDULING INFORMATION

--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 is under no obligation to assist these coaches with their conflicts.

--MRL games may be scheduled during other US Youth Soccer sanctioned competitions during Spring Season weekends, but must be played under MRL rules. 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 (see 2009 Fall Season Scheduling Policy for the most recent policy).

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GIRLS AGE GROUP INFORMATION

The MRL's 2010 Spring Season features competition in five Girls Age Groups (U14, U15, U16, U17, and U18) with teams placed into the following Premier and First Divisions.

GIRLS PREMIER DIVISIONS

Competition: The Premier Division is comprised of teams that have earned their placement through results from the 2009 Spring (U15, U16, U17, U18) or 2009 Fall (U14) MRL seasons. The list of the teams that have earned placement into the Girls Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season is posted at www.MidwestRegionalLeague.com. There will be one Premier Division in each age group (except the U14's where two divisions of 8 teams will be utilized) with round-robin play determining the final standings of the teams (expect to play 9 games except in the U14 Premier Division where teams should expect to play 7 games). The top-finishing team in the Premier Division that is not a state cup champion or state cup drawn wild card shall earn the MRL Wild Card slot into the 2010 US Youth Soccer Midwest Region Championships. Note: Teams that qualify to play in the 2009 Fall Season and 2010 Spring Season Premier Divisions may only compete for the Regional Wild Card during one of the two seasons. Thus teams may be competing in the Premier Division but will be ineligible for the Wild Card slot for that particular season (and age group).

Relegation: based on the number of teams, the MRL Commission shall determine the number of teams (in no case shall it be less than two) to be relegated to the First Division for the 2010 Spring Season.

Scheduling Meeting: A mandatory Scheduling Meeting for all 2010 Spring Season Premier Division teams will take place on Saturday, December 19, 2009 at the Indianapolis (IN) Hilton North. Teams will be provided the opportunity to finalize their schedules, face-to-face, with other teams within their division. Information on the meeting will be distributed to teams once they are formally accepted into the MRL (around November 30) with availability information due to the MRL by no later than December 15. The MRL Commission, at its sole discretion, shall determine the penalty a team will be assessed in missing the mandatory Scheduling Meeting. In the Under 16, 17 and 18 Premier Divisions, teams are encouraged by the MRL to play only one game per day. Every effort should be made to schedule teams for two games per weekend although team philosophies and field availability may dictate otherwise.

GIRLS FIRST DIVISIONS

Competition: Teams accepted into the MRL including any returning teams that did not earn a spot in the Premier Division and those first-time MRL teams shall be placed in the First Division. Based on the number of qualified teams, the First Division may be sub-divided into divisions for regular season MRL play. A round-robin competition within your division (or sub-division) shall take place to determine the standings of teams (this competition could consist of as few as five games and as many as 11 games all based on the number of teams accepted into your age group). At the discretion of the MRL and based on the number of accepted teams, the MRL may create geographic sub-divisions (see the Boys and Girls U-14 divisions in the 2009 Fall Season for an example of such structure). Note: the number of teams in each age group shall determine the structure of the First Division. Be advised that we can not guarantee a U-18 First Division will be conducted.

Promotion: No less than two (2) teams from the First Division in the U14, U15, U16 and U17 age groups shall be promoted to the Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season. No fewer than two (2) from the First Division in the U14, U15, U16 and U17 age groups may be promoted to the Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season. In age groups that have sub-divisions the MRL will determine prior to the start of the Spring Season the number of teams that are promoted from within each sub-division into the Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season.

Scheduling: The MRL may have face-to-face scheduling meetings for the First Division. The process for First Division Scheduling will be determined on or around November 30 following the acceptance of teams into the MRL. Those First Division teams based in Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio (as well as all Girls U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-18 First Divisions) should expect that the scheduling meeting for their First Division competitions will take place in Indianapolis on December 19 (although this may not be finalized until November 30). First Division teams will be required to submit weekend playing availability to the MRL by no later than December 15. On weekends where multiple teams are playing at one site, teams should expect to play three games in a weekend (two games on Saturday and one game on Sunday except for the U17 age group where due to SAT testing on May 1, expect to play one game on Saturday and two on Sunday). **Teams must be available to play on the designated Must Be Available to Play Weekends**, although the schedule may not require teams to participate on each of these weekends. Teams that are competing in their State Cup competitions on these dates will not need to be available for MRL play on such dates but must also be available to play on April 3-4 and 10-11. It is the responsibility of teams affected by their State Cup competitions on Must Be Available to Play Weekends to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the spring.

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BOYS AGE GROUP INFORMATION

The MRL's 2010 Spring Season features competition in five Boys Age Groups (U14, U15, U16, U17, and U18) with teams placed into the following Premier and First Divisions.

BOYS PREMIER DIVISIONS

Competition: The Premier Division is comprised of teams that have earned their placement through results from the 2009 Spring (U15, U16, U17, U18) or 2009 Fall (U14) MRL seasons. The list of the teams that have earned placement into the Boys Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season is posted at www.MidwestRegionalLeague.com. There will be two Premier Divisions (Red and Blue) in each age group with round-robin play within each sub-division determining the final standings of the teams. The MRL shall determine the final number of teams in each division. The top-finishing team in each of the Premier Divisions (Red and Blue) that is not a state cup champion or state cup drawn wild card shall earn the MRL Wild Card slot into the 2009 US Youth Soccer Midwest Region Championships (a total of 2 teams earn MRL wild card slots in each age group).

Relegation: based on the number of teams, the MRL Commission shall determine the number of teams (in no case shall it be less than two—one from each division) to be relegated to the First Division for the 2010 Spring Season. Note in 2009 the bottom three teams from each division were relegated (a total of four teams).

Scheduling Meeting: A mandatory Scheduling Meeting for all 2010 Spring Season Premier Division teams will take place on Saturday, December 19, 2009 at the Indianapolis (IN) Hilton North. Teams will be provided the opportunity to finalize their schedules, face-to-face, with other teams within their division. Information on the meeting will be distributed to teams once they are formally accepted into the MRL (around November 26) with availability information due to the MRL by no later than December 15. The MRL Commission, at its sole discretion, shall determine the penalty a team will be assessed in missing the mandatory Scheduling Meeting. In the Under 16, 17 and 18 Premier Divisions, teams are encouraged by the MRL to play only one game per day. Every effort should be made to schedule teams for two games per weekend although team philosophies and field availability may dictate otherwise.

BOYS FIRST DIVISIONS

Competition: Teams accepted into the MRL including any returning teams that did not earn a spot in the Premier Division and those first-time MRL teams shall be placed in the First Division. Based on the number of qualified teams, the First Division may be sub-divided into divisions for regular season MRL play. A round-robin competition within your division (or sub-division) shall take place to determine the standings of teams (this competition could consist of as few as five games and as many as 11 games all based on the number of teams accepted into your age group). At the discretion of the MRL and based on the number of accepted teams, the MRL may create geographic sub-divisions (see the Boys and Girls U-14 divisions in the 2009 Fall Season for an example of such structure).

Promotion: No fewer than two (2) and up to six (6) teams from the First Division in the U14, U15, U16 and U17 age groups may be promoted to the Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season. In age groups that have sub-divisions the MRL will determine prior to the start of the Spring Season the number of teams that are promoted from within each sub-division into the Premier Division for the 2010 Spring Season.

Scheduling: The MRL may have face-to-face scheduling meetings for the First Division. The process for First Division Scheduling will be determined on or around November 30 following the acceptance of teams into the MRL. Those First Division teams based in Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio should expect that the scheduling meeting for their First Division competitions will take place in Indianapolis on December 19 (although this may not be finalized until November 30). First Division teams will be required to submit weekend playing availability to the MRL by no later than December 15. On weekends where multiple teams are playing at one site, teams should expect to play three games in a weekend (two games on Saturday and one game on Sunday except for the U17 age group where due to SAT testing on May 1, expect to play one game on Saturday and two on Sunday). **Teams must be available to play on the designated Must Be Available to Play Weekends**, although the schedule may not require teams to participate on each of these weekends. Teams that are competing in their State Cup competitions on these dates will not need to be available for MRL play on such dates but must also be available to play on April 3-4 and 10-11. It is the responsibility of teams affected by their State Cup competitions on Must Be Available to Play Weekends to be flexible in being able to schedule MRL games on other weekends during the spring.