



MYS

McLEAN YOUTH SOCCER

Recreation Program Town Hall

Spring 2026



Tonight's Agenda



Age Group Change

What's changing in Fall 2026
and how it affects your child.



Travel Program

Opportunities, commitment, and
knowing when it's right.



Recreation Q&A

Recognizing our coaches,
volunteers, and player journeys.

Q&A will follow each section.



PART ONE

Age Group Change

What's changing and what it means for your family.



Why is This Happening?

US Soccer Guidance

US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer, and AYSO have collectively decided to move to an **August 1 - July 31** age group formation cycle.

This change takes effect with the **2026-2027 season**, beginning Fall 2026.

Source: usyouthsoccer.org, June 10, 2025

What This Means

OLD System:

January 1 - December 31
(Calendar Year)

NEW System:

August 1 - July 31
(School Year)



2026-2027 Age Group Calculator

Find your child's Fall 2026 age group based on their birth date.

Age Group	Birth Dates (Aug 1 - July 31)	Approx. Grade (Fall 2026)
U5	Aug 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022	Pre-K
U6	Aug 1, 2020 - July 31, 2021	Kindergarten
U7	Aug 1, 2019 - July 31, 2020	1st Grade
U8	Aug 1, 2018 - July 31, 2019	2nd Grade
U9	Aug 1, 2017 - July 31, 2018	3rd Grade
U10	Aug 1, 2016 - July 31, 2017	4th Grade
U11	Aug 1, 2015 - July 31, 2016	5th Grade
U12	Aug 1, 2014 - July 31, 2015	6th Grade
U13	Aug 1, 2013 - July 31, 2014	7th Grade
U14	Aug 1, 2012 - July 31, 2013	8th Grade

Full age group table (U3-U19) available at mcleansoccer.org/age-group-change



How will your player be affected?



Born January - July

Your child will continue playing with the same peer group.

No significant changes to teammates or competition level.



Born August - December

Your child may shift to a new age group aligned with their school grade.

For U11-U19 NCSL Rec players:
Option to stay with current peers OR move to younger group.

Players are not allowed to play in a younger age group, a medical waiver is required.



Benefits of School Year Grouping



School Alignment

Players compete with kids in the same school grade, creating natural social connections.



Play with Classmates

Your child is more likely to participate with children in the same school grade.



Increased Retention

Research shows kids stay in soccer longer when playing with school friends.



Fair Competition

Age-appropriate development and competition with peers at similar life stages.

This returns us to the system used before 2017 that many families preferred



What Should Parents Do?

1

Look Up Your Child's Age Group

Use the calculator at mcleansoccer.org/age-group-change or ussoccer.com.

2

Talk Positively with Your Child

Frame this as an opportunity to play with school friends.

3

Stay Informed

Watch for emails and check our website for updates throughout spring 2026.

4

Register on Time

Follow registration instructions for the 2026-2027 season.

Questions? Contact: trevor.lamb@mcleansoccer.org or lynne.shank@mcleansoccer.org.



PART TWO

Travel Program

Understanding opportunities, commitment, and timing.

Travel Program Overview



Program Levels (U13+)

Elite	Competitive	Travel
Girls Academy & MLS Next AD	GA Aspire & NAL	NCSL/EDP Travel

Program Levels (U9-U12)

Green	White	Gold	Silver
NCSL Travel	NCSL Travel	NCSL Travel	NCSL Travel

What Travel Includes:

- ✓ Team training 2-3 times per week (year-round for elite levels).
- ✓ League play in NCSL, EDP, or regional leagues.
- ✓ 4-8 tournaments per year depending on age and level.
- ✓ Professional technical staff oversight.
- ✓ One-year commitment (August - July).



MYS COMPETITIVE PATHWAY

Leagues & Competition Levels

TIER 1 — HIGHEST LEVEL



MLS NEXT Academy Division

Highest level of competition for U13–U19 boys. Part of the MLS player development pathway.



Girls Academy

Highest level of competition for U13–U19 girls. National platform for elite female players.

TIER 2 — SECOND LEVEL (GREEN TEAMS)



National Academy League (NAL)

Second-level league for U13–U19 Green boys teams. High-quality regional competition.



Girls Academy Aspire

Second-level league for U13–U19 Green girls teams. Development pathway within GA platform.

TIER 3 — PRIMARY TRAVEL LEAGUE



National Capital Soccer League (NCSL)

Most U9–U12 teams and U13–U19 White teams. DC Metro's primary travel league with 4–6 divisions per age group.



Recreation Program

U3–U19 • All skill levels • See next slide

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Ages 3–19 | Fun-First Development | All Skill Levels Welcome



U3-U4 Mini Kickers

Born 2022–2023

Parent & player sessions led by MYS staff. Fun activities building balance, coordination, and social skills. 6 Saturday sessions per season.



U5-U6 Kickstart

Born 2020–2021

Part of the US Youth Soccer 3v3 Game Format Project. Weekly practice + Saturday 3v3 games. Optional Rec Academy sessions with staff coaches.



U7-U8 Academy

Born 2018–2019

Academy-style format with MYS staff coaching every other week alongside volunteers. 4v4/5v5 Saturday games with continuous play model.



U9-U10 Program

Born 2016–2017

Team-oriented 7v7 play with goalkeeper introduction. MYS Technical Staff visit games for volunteer coach support and education.



U11-U19 NCSL Rec

Born 2007–2015

MYS teams compete in the NCSL Recreation league across Northern Virginia and DC. No tryouts required. Saturday/Sunday games.



Additional Programs

Year-round options

TopSoccer (adaptive), MDP talent identification (U9–U12), Rec Academy training, Pumpkin League (winter), Watermelon Cup (summer).



Understanding the Commitment

	Recreation	Travel
Practices/Week	1 practice	2-3 practices
Season Length	Fall & Spring (8-10 wks)	Year-round or Fall + Spring
Games	8 per Fall/Spring season	10-24 league
Tournaments	Optional	4-8 per year
Travel Distance	Local fields	Regional (occasionally farther)
Cost	~\$195/season	~\$2,000-3,200/year
Coaching	Volunteer coach	Professional licensed coach

Travel costs vary by team level and tournament travel requirements.



Is Your Child Ready for Travel?



Signs They May Be Ready

- ✓ Asks for more soccer.
- ✓ Practices on their own.
- ✓ Loves competition.
- ✓ Handles wins AND losses well.
- ✓ Ready for increased commitment.
- ✓ Family can support the schedule.



Signs to Wait

- Doesn't ask for more soccer.
- Gets upset when losing.
- Resistant to practice schedule.
- Needs time for other activities.
- Still developing confidence.
- Family schedule is very full.

There's no "right" age - it depends on the individual child and family



Transitions Work Both Ways

It's okay to move from the travel level back to recreation.

Recreation → Travel

Travel → Recreation

Valid Reasons to Return to Recreation:

- ✓ Schedule conflicts with school, other activities, or family needs.
- ✓ Burnout or decrease in enjoyment at the travel competitions.
- ✓ Desire to play other sports or explore different interests.
- ✓ Social reasons - priority to play with friends in recreation.
- ✓ Prefer the recreation environment.

Our goal is for EVERY player to enjoy soccer, regardless of program level.



PART THREE

Celebrating Our Community

Recognizing the coaches and players who make MYS special.



Our Volunteer Coaches

The backbone of our recreation program.

178

Volunteer Coaches
This Season



11 High School Students

Coaching as assistant and head coaches.



Ongoing Education

Coaches participating in Coach Education.

These coaches are not just teaching soccer — they are community leaders.

- ✓ Parents, educators, and professionals volunteering their time.
- ✓ Teaching teamwork, resilience, and sportsmanship.
- ✓ Creating positive memories that last a lifetime.



Growing Up with MYS

Players who started at U6 and continued through U19



13 Years of Development

Hundreds

of games played.

Dozens

of coaches learned from.

Lifetime

of friendships formed.

This is what youth soccer is about: the journey, not just the results.



Thank You

For being part of the MYS family!

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Age Group Info: mcleansoccer.org/age-group-change

Travel Program: mcleansoccer.org/travel-program



Questions & Discussion



Thank you for your attention and participation.

mcleansoccer.org