

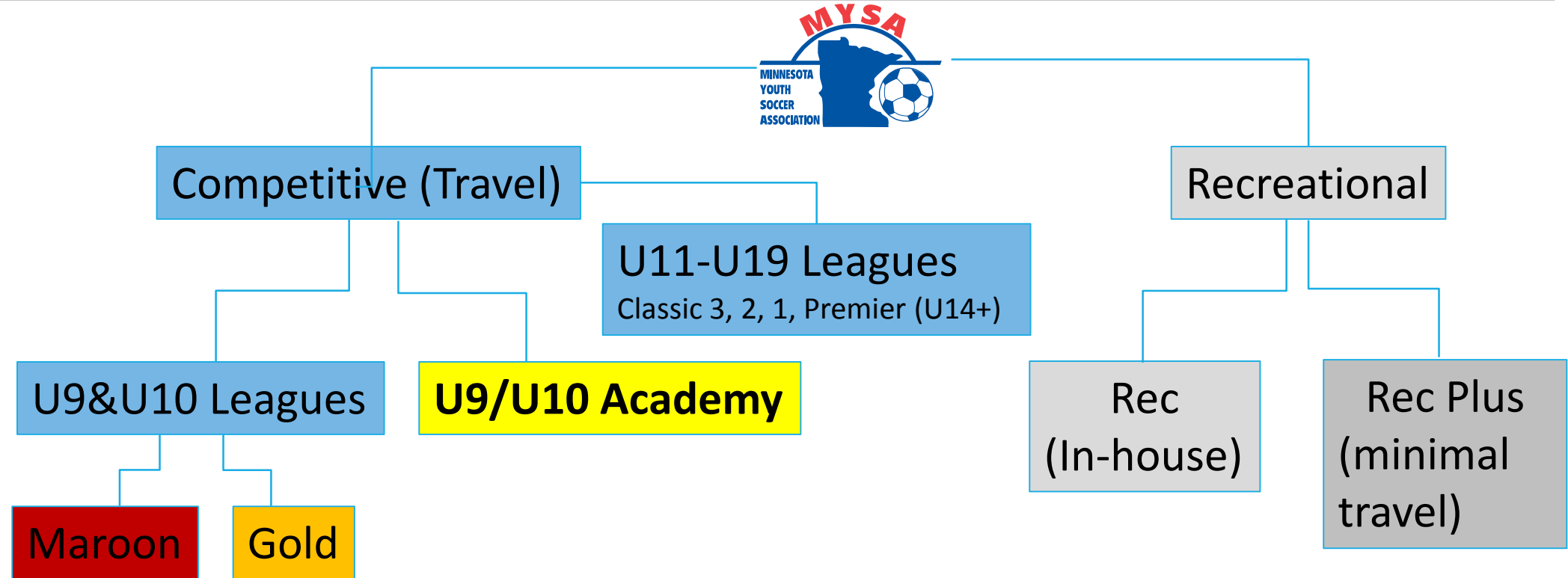


# MYSA Youth Academy Program

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A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

# MYSA Play Options for Member Clubs



# What is an “Academy”?

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- Strategic approach to create an optimal learning environment during a critical stage of development
- Alternative to the traditional team/league structure
- A response to frustrating shortfalls in development showed by most pre-teens
- Seeks greater individual player development, satisfaction, and retention
- Academy programs are operated by many states and endorsed by:

U.S. Soccer Federation



US Youth Soccer



# Why Create an Academy Program?

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- To emphasize individual player development at a critical stage of development.
- To increase the probability of evenly matched opponents, making travel and matches more worthwhile.
- To improve training-to-game ratios and seasonal/yearly periodization.
- To develop larger future pools of good-to-great players.

# MYSA Academy Program Key Elements

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- Individual player development
- Pool training and flexible match rosters
- Paired age groups (U9 and U10 together)
- Appropriate training-to-match ratio
- 10-month calendar for the committed player & family
- Licensure standards for Club Academy Directors and Coaches

# Sample Calendar

Period	DEVELOPMENT I				OFF		DEVELOPMENT II		DEVELOPMENT III			
Month	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
	Fall Kickoff Festival										Summer Showcase	
Matches	3	3	3	1			1	2	2	2	4	2
Trainings	8	10	10	8			8	8	10	10	10	6

- Individual Club schedules will vary
- Winter matches may include futsal or other indoor variations
- Facilitates a recommended ~23-26 matches and ~75-80 trainings

# Who is a Good Fit for the Academy?

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- ❖ Clubs can set their own criteria for inclusion among their membership

Generally:

- A highly committed player, regardless of current ability
- A player who loves soccer, though may still participate in other sports
- A family that understands and accepts a commitment to a 10-month training and competition calendar
- A family that understands and accepts a more individualized approach to player development

# League / Academy Distinctions

- ❖ Participation in the Academy program is optional for clubs and families, and is an added offering alongside traditional leagues

Traditional League Structure	Academy Program
Team rosters are fixed – more predictable	Match-day rosters are flexible – more variable
Players train with their team/Coach – team culture	Players train with a pool/multiple Coaches – club culture
Team development tends to be high priority	Individual player development is high priority
Shorter-term focus – peak by gameday	Longer-term view – peak in late teens or 20’s
More pressure on players, parents, coaches	Maximize learning & enjoyment for players, parents, coaches
Measure success largely by team results	Measure success more by individual progress



# What About Competition?

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- A central purpose is to create more meaningful competitions through flexible match-day rosters to avoid blowouts that don't serve player development.
- Keeping score during a match is different from recording team scores. Each match is a competitive event but there is reduced pressure for team results that can stunt player development.
- The Academy encourages players to try new things, take risks, and learn to play “skillful” soccer, not merely “effective” soccer.

# Pool Training Benefits

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- Not a refusal to recognize social benefits of belonging to a team
- Pool is a bigger team with expanded social opportunities, valuable for making more friends and for the future when teams are larger
- Individuals can learn from and be challenged by a greater diversity of talents in a pool
- More player exposure to expert coaches
- Sense of club culture and belonging

# Pool Rostering Benefits

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- Clubs can move players to address individual development needs
- Flexible rosters can create more evenly matched competitions, making games more impactful and travel more worthwhile
- Allows for a continuous assessment for team formation rather than a one-time assessment prior to a season.

# Who do I contact for more info?

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- Your Club Academy Director
  - For most questions and information, including operational details
- MYSA Director of Coaching and Player Development John Curtis
  - For big-picture questions about the Academy philosophy and mission
  - [johncurtis@mnyouthsoccer.org](mailto:johncurtis@mnyouthsoccer.org), 952-252-1686

# Resources

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- [MYSA Academy web page](#)
- [The Paramount Issue](#) article
- [Creativity – The Missing Link](#) presentation