



MLS NEXT - NEW COMPETITION TIER
FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025





WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS PRESENTATION

- Why MU
- Why MLS NEXT - new competition tier
- MLS's naming of the league
- Structure of league
- MU's roster planning
- The 2025-26 anticipated calendar
- League Rules and Expectations





WHY MLS VS OTHER LEAGUES

- Why MU?
- Timing of opportunity
- Alternative options
 - US Soccer, USYS, US Club and MLS
- Future of youth soccer
- Six (6) age groups 13U/2013-19U/2007
- 15U+ will play High School soccer in the fall
- MU is one of 10 Clubs in the “North Conference”
 - MN - MU, Blackhawks, Lakeville, Manitou, and TFE
 - WI - Bavarians, Elmbrook United, FC Wisconsin, Forward Madison, and SC Wave





MLS NEXT SEASON CALENDAR

- July 2025
 - Tryouts | All Ages
- August 2025
 - Practices begin on August 17, 2025 | 13U-14U
 - Players join High School teams | 15U and older
- September and October 2025 (6-10 games)
 - MLS NEXT games may begin September 6 for 13U-14U
 - Average of 3 practices a week for entire season (some weeks will be more or less)
 - 6 MLS Next Games | 13U-14U
- November 2025 (scrimmages only)
 - Practices begin (outdoor & indoor) - Average of 3 practices a week for entire season (some weeks will be more or less) | All Ages
 - Scrimmages | All Ages
- December 2025 (3-4 games)
 - 13U-19U | MLS NEXT Flex Showcase - Dates & location TBD
- January 2026 (5 games)
 - Shattuck St. Mary's Showcase | 17U-19U
 - 2 MLS Next games in MN | All Ages
- February 2026
 - NAL Showcase, Florida | 15U-19U
- March 2026 (2 games)
 - 2 MLS Next games in MN
- April 2026 (8-10 games)
 - 5 MLS Next games in both MN and WI
 - MLS Next Regionals - April 10-13, 2026 | U13-U19 | Voice of America Athletic Complex (West Chester, OH)
- May 2026 (4-7 games)
 - 2 MLS games in MN completed by May 10 | All Ages
 - Teams may participate in MN Cup or MN State Cup | All Ages
- June 2026 (0-10 games)
 - MLS NEXT Cup (must qualify) and Showcase (optional) | All Ages
 - USYS or US Club Nationals (must qualify) | All Ages
 - USA Cup



SUPPLEMENTAL GAMES AND SHOWCASES

- MU is committed to providing a comprehensive season of development and competition that includes the proper level of practices and games.
- Teams will have some supplemental games, practices, scrimmages and showcases. These details will be added with thoughtful consideration to not overload the players once the MLS schedule has been set.





ESTIMATED GAME COUNT

13U & 14U

- MLS NEXT League: 18-24 *
- MLS Showcases: 7-10 **
 - MLS NEXT Flex
 - MLS NEXT Regionals
 - MLS Cup
- Non-MLS Tournaments: 9-12 ***
 - MN Cup
 - US Club Nationals
 - USA Cup
- Scrimmages: 5

Total = 39-52 games

15U & 16U

- MLS NEXT League: 13-18 *
- MLS Showcases: 7-10 **
 - MLS NEXT Flex
 - MLS NEXT Regionals
 - MLS Cup
- Non-MLS Tournaments: 9-12 ***
 - MN Cup
 - US Club Nationals
 - USA Cup
- Scrimmages: 2

Total = 31-42 games (+ HS games)

17U - 19U

- MLS NEXT League: 13-18 *
- MLS Showcases: 7-10 **
 - MLS NEXT Flex
 - MLS NEXT Regionals
 - MLS Cup
- Non-MLS Tournaments: 9-12 ***
 - Shattuck St. Mary's
 - MN Cup
 - US Club Nationals
- Scrimmages: 2

Total = 31-42 games (+ HS games)



LEAGUE RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Maximum roster size of 28 (though MU's rosters will be smaller than that)
- Professional game environment at every match: Hydration station, match video, qualified medical professional, bench, and tent
- Minimum training calendar is 3 days a week
- Core Fees and Team Fees for travel:
 - Not set. Core Fees will increase for 2025-26
 - Applications for Financial Aid (75%, 50% and 25% off Core Fees)
 - "FA players" have access to Team Fees Financial Aid funds thanks to Luther Auto Group
- We do not have all the answers. MLS is providing more information every week

Q & A from MU's meeting on May 16, 2025:

Q: Will tryouts be held the same dates and look the same?

A: Tryout dates will remain as announced. The tryouts will be very similar. We could see more players trying out for these teams.

Will MU use a pool of players at each age group or name a team at each age group?

A: No. Our plan is to have one roster per team at MU, as the Club has typically formed teams. And as normal, MU will utilize guest players from within the Club if there are needs for additional players.

Q: Has MLS Next announced if they will change the age group criteria for the 2026-27 season yet?

A: No, MLS has not determined their age group criteria for the 2026-27 season. *((However, US Club and TCSL have announced that they will change the age groups again to be aligned with the school year. Currently, teams are formed by birth year. (EX: players born in 2011 are currently 14U). Beginning with tryouts in July 2026, MU's teams playing in US Club and TCSL will be formed to match the school year and by age as follows: birth dates between September 1 - August 31. (EX: Beginning with the results of tryouts in July 2026 - September 1, 2011 through August 31, 2012 will be one age group.))*

Q & A continued... 2 of 4

Q: What is the official name of the league?

A: MLS will be announcing the name soon. MU was told that the new name is being discussed with their legal team.

Q: What will MU teams be called that are participating in this MLS league? And, what will happen to other MU team names?

A: MU will name this level of team after the league. The plan is to keep the other designations of teams that are currently used: Academy, Premier, Copa, Samba and Tango.

Q: Some age groups currently have 2 Academy teams. Will MU have 2 MLS teams at some age groups?

A: No. beginning in September 2025 MU will have 1 team at this level of play for the following 6 age groups: 13U/2013, 14U/2012, 15U/2011, 16U/2010, 17U/2009 and 18U/2008/19U/2007 age groups.

Q: Will players on MU's MLS teams be able to play High School?

A: Yes.

Q & A continued... 3 of 4

Q: Will MU's MLS Next new tier Core Fees be more than the current Core Fees for MU's Academy teams?

A: Yes. Core Fee details will be released soon.

Q: Will team fees and travel increase?

A: This is a tough answer because it will depend on the age group. The 13U and 14U age groups will travel more than they have in the past. The 15U and older teams will have very similar team fees (travel) as the top level Academy teams. These teams will participate in showcases that involve travel - both a flight or driving distances. However, we should know of these situations far enough in advance in an effort to keep costs down. One of the benefits of playing in the new tier of MLS Next is that our calendar will be set for the entire year.

Q: Does this league and MU's teams replace the MNUFC Loons academy teams?

A: No. This is in addition to the MNUFC youth academy.

Q & A continued... 4 of 4

Q: Is there promotion and relegation between the tiers of MLS Next?

A: Not at this time. At showcase events, MU teams will likely be playing against both tiers of competition.

Q: How will MU approach coaches for these teams, assuming there are higher license requirements?

A: MLS does have higher expectations of coaching education. However, they are going to provide a time period for current coaches to receive professional development. MU has had interest in a number of coaches to be involved with these teams. Coaches will be announced when it is determined that we have the right fit in place.

Q: Does MLS impose limits on recruiting between and among teams/clubs in the conference, and will this change how MU gets players?

A: There are rules in place to discourage recruitment from players that are registered with other clubs. Furthermore, MU does not believe in recruiting players from other clubs. Of course, families approach other families and sometimes even MU coaches to learn more about MU. However, MU will not actively recruit players from other clubs.