

PA West Newsletter

Fall 2026

FALL SOCCER IS HERE!

Fall has arrived, and soccer is underway across Western Pennsylvania! From players taking the field to coaches and referees developing their skills, PA West Soccer has opportunities for players, coaches, referees and families to stay connected to the game.

October Is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



October is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, and **PA West Soccer** encourages our soccer community to come together to support those affected by breast cancer, honor survivors, and remember those we've lost. Just as soccer brings people together on the field, we can unite off the field to spread awareness and show support for those facing this disease.

Take action this October! Wear pink, share breast cancer awareness resources, and encourage conversations about early detection. Every effort helps make a difference. Let's stand together as a soccer community to spread awareness, offer encouragement, and remind those affected that they are not alone.

A More Connected Future for Youth Soccer

U.S. Soccer and US Youth Soccer have announced a historic integration designed to create greater alignment across the American soccer landscape. For PA West Soccer Association, this represents an exciting opportunity to strengthen the connection between youth soccer and the broader U.S. Soccer structure while continuing to provide quality programs and development opportunities for players, coaches, referees and clubs throughout Western Pennsylvania.

As the integration moves forward, PA West Soccer will continue to keep our members informed about what changes may mean for our soccer community and how we can take advantage of new opportunities created through a more connected national system.

To read more about US Soccer and US Youth Soccer' integration, ***click here***.

2026 PA West Soccer State Championships

PA West

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

U11-U14 BOYS & GIRLS

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2026

The fall competition season continues this November with the 2026 PA West Soccer State Championships, bringing U11, U12, U13 and U14 teams together for a weekend of competitive soccer across Western Pennsylvania.

The PA West Soccer State Championships are scheduled for November 14–15, 2026, giving participating teams an opportunity to compete for a PA West Soccer championship while putting their development and teamwork to the test.

Tournament Information:

- **Dates: November 14–15, 2026**
- **Registration: Ends October 23, 2026**
- **Age Groups: U11–U14 (Boys and Girls)**
- **Location: Sites to be determined by PA West Soccer State Championship Committee**

The PA West Soccer State Championships are one of PA West Soccer's premier state-level competitions, providing teams with an opportunity to compete against clubs from across Western Pennsylvania. Tournament sites, schedules and additional competition information will be announced by PA West Soccer as they become available.

For all PA West Soccer State Championships information, click here.

PA West TOPSoccer Riverhounds Experience



PA West TOPSoccer brought the joy of soccer to a special setting this August with the TOPSoccer Riverhounds Experience. Players enjoyed a memorable afternoon alongside the Pittsburgh Riverhounds, creating opportunities for fun, connection and time on the field.

That same spirit of inclusion was on display at Pittsburgh's FIFA World Cup Fan Zone at Acrisure Stadium, home of the Pittsburgh Steelers, which featured youth soccer opportunities, including a clinic for Special Olympics athletes. Together, these experiences highlight an important message: soccer is for everyone.

Through TOPSoccer, PA West Soccer continues to provide opportunities for players of all abilities to stay active, build confidence and enjoy the game across Western Pennsylvania.

Click here to get involved with TOPSoccer today.

Youth News

Century United Makes PA West History

Century United's U17 Boys made history this summer, **becoming the first PA West Soccer team to win a US Youth Soccer National Championship**.

After opening the tournament with a 5-2 loss to Pitt-Greenville Stars, Century United bounced back with a 5-1 win over Gretna Elite Academy and a 5-3 victory over Sporting Arkansas. In the quarterfinals, Century United battled Mandeville Soccer Club to a 1-1 draw before advancing 5-4 on penalties.

The team then defeated TF Rapids SC in the semifinals before meeting Pitt-Greenville again in the championship. Century United completed the comeback with a 2-1 victory, earning the 2026 USYS U17 Boys Premier National Championship.

Century United Players Earn National Honors

Following their historic USYS National Championship run, Century United U17 players **Cody Cwynar** and **Brendan Seaman** earned individual national recognition.

Cwynar was named the U17 Boys Premier Golden Ball recipient, while Seaman earned the Golden Glove award, highlighting two standout performances from PA West Soccer's first-ever USYS National Championship team.

PA West ODP Players Earn Interregional Invitations

PA West Soccer is proud to recognize 20 ODP players invited to represent the state at upcoming US Youth Soccer ODP Interregional Events.

GIRLS
2010: **Ellieanna Arnold**
2011: **Reese Gibbons**
2012: **Domi Childs**, **Devyn Greggs**, **Giamaria Fonz Moscatiello**
2013 Younger: **Francesca Koon**, **Avery Cooper**, **Dahimy Martinez**
2014 Younger: **Lydia Merz**, **Clara Palmieri**, **Cadence Wolski**, **Kylee Kulbacki**
2014 Older: **Sophia Szweda**, **Kendall Gilbert**, **Kierstyn Graham**

BOYS
2010: **Jude Perhacs**, **Ryan Helman**
2011: **Ryan Colabine**
2013: **Henry Waterstram**, **Beckett Hartman**

Congratulations to all 20 PA West ODP players on this tremendous accomplishment!

Click here to learn more about PA West Soccer's ODP program.

Western Pennsylvania Futsal League

Futsal Is Back! Registration Is Now Open!

Keep the game going this winter with the Western Pennsylvania Futsal League! Teams from across Western Pennsylvania are invited to compete in an exciting winter league designed to keep players active, developing and getting valuable touches on the ball.

Season: November 21–22, 2026 through February 20–21, 2027
Location: All American Field House
Age Groups: U8–U19
Games: 8 games per team
Cost: $550 per team

Futsal is a great way for players to develop their technical skills, decision-making and creativity while enjoying the game in a fast-paced environment. Registration is open now — get your team registered and keep developing all winter long! ***Click here to register for futsal today.***

Questions? Contact **Aydin Polliard** at **(412) 965-6578 or WesternPAFutsal@gmail.com.**

GPSL: Competitive & Recreational Soccer for Adults

The soccer journey doesn't have to end when players age out of youth soccer.

The **Greater Pittsburgh Soccer League** (GPSL) provides opportunities to continue competing and stay connected to the game.

The 2026 GPSL O19 Open season wrapped up with **four** August champions: **Tartan Devils FC** (Premier), **Lions** (Championship), **Dukes of Hazard** (Miners), and **Victory FC** (Keystone). In the O19 Coed final, **Pittsburgh Dynamo** defeated **Lucky Strikes** FC, 2-1 in extra time, to claim the title.

Fall action continues with O19 Open games through **November 1** and O19 Coed playoffs on **November 5 and 9**. The O30 and O40 divisions are also heading toward their playoffs.

With approximately 2,400 registered adult players, PA West's Adult Program continues to provide opportunities across Western Pennsylvania, including the new 5v5 league introduced this summer.

For schedules, standings and playoff information, click here to visit the **PA West Adult Soccer platform**. To learn more about adult soccer opportunities, visit the **Greater Pittsburgh Soccer League** website by **clicking here**.





The Game Can’t Happen Without Referees

Referees play an essential role in creating a safe, fair and enjoyable environment for everyone on the field. PA West Soccer provides opportunities for referees at every stage of their journey, from those taking their first steps as a Grassroots referee to officials working toward higher levels of certification and advancement.

Whether you’re interested in becoming a referee, continuing your development or taking the next step in the referee pathway, PA West offers courses, clinics, mentoring and assessment opportunities to help you grow. With flexible opportunities to officiate throughout Western Pennsylvania, refereeing is a great way to stay connected to the game while developing valuable skills and giving back to the soccer community.

Ready to get involved? ***Click here to explore referee courses, resources and development opportunities through PA West Soccer.***





Now Is the Time To Plan Your Coaching Education!

As the fall season winds down, now is a great time for coaches to start planning their next step in coaching education.

Whether you're looking to complete your first Grassroots course or advance toward a higher-level license, PA West Soccer has opportunities to help you build your foundation, grow your knowledge and advance your coaching craft.

Start planning ahead and find an upcoming course that fits your goals and schedule.

Click here to view the requirements to become a coach.

PA West Soccer Officially Sanctioned USYS ODP Talent Development Program of U.S. Soccer!

PA West Soccer is proud to be an officially sanctioned USYS ODP Talent Development Program of the U.S. Soccer Federation.

The 2026/27 season provides another opportunity for talented players across Western Pennsylvania to develop their skills, compete at a high level and pursue additional player identification opportunities through the Olympic Development Program (ODP).

Through PA West ODP, players can take part in advanced training and development opportunities while working toward the next stage of their soccer journey. We look forward to another exciting season of developing the region's top talent.

Learn more about PA West Soccer ODP by clicking here.

PA West Soccer Members: More Choices, More Savings

As a PA West Soccer member, you have special access to **Farmers Insurance Choice**, giving you an easy way to compare insurance options that fit your needs and budget. Members can explore coverage for auto, home and renters insurance while receiving multiple quotes from participating carriers, helping you find an option that works for you.

Whether you're looking to review your current coverage or simply see what options are available, Farmers Insurance Choice makes it easy to compare and explore your choices in one place.

Learn more and get your free quotes through Farmers Insurance Choice.

Get to Know Our Board Members



Nick Druga has been a dedicated member of the Western Pennsylvania soccer community for years. As PA West Soccer's North District Director and a leader within the PA West TOPSoccer program, Nick is passionate about creating opportunities for players of all abilities to experience the game.

From supporting clubs and families across the North District to helping create memorable experiences through TOPSoccer, Nick has seen firsthand how soccer can bring people and communities together. In 2026, his commitment to the game was recognized when he was named PA West Soccer's Administrator of the Year.

We recently caught up with Nick to talk about TOPSoccer, the impact of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, youth soccer in Western Pennsylvania, and what keeps him passionate about the game.

Q&A With Nick Druga

1. ***With the 2026 FIFA World Cup being in the United States this past summer, what kind of lasting impact do you think it will have on young players and the growth of soccer in Western Pennsylvania?***

"We had the greatest examples of modern soccer right in our own backyard this summer. So much attention was given to the sport that it's bound to increase awareness and inspire curious families to give soccer a try. The challenge now falls to our youth coaches and community programs to meet families and players where they are, encourage appropriate developmental pathways, and model positive, respectful behavior. If we can do that, we'll bridge the gap between watching the very best players in the world on television and taking those first steps in a local youth program."

2. ***What makes TOPSoccer so special to you, and what have the players and families involved in the program taught you along the way?***

"I have had the privilege of coaching many different teams, both boys and girls, from the youngest age groups through high school, and the TOPSoccer teams have been among my absolute favorites. In my five years as TOPSoccer Chair, and even longer as a TOPSoccer coach, I have yet to have a bad practice. Players, families, coaches, and buddies leave whatever else is happening in their lives in the parking lot and arrive with joy in their hearts to share this amazing game.

There are challenges at every practice, but they are met with creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to work together, and they're almost always overcome in short order. There is no pretense and definitely no judgment. Just a group of people coming together to enjoy the game. It's incredible to have the opportunity to be humbled and centered every week. TOPSoccer reminds me that the world can be an amazing place when we simply meet each other where we are."

3. ***The TOPSoccer Riverhounds Experience was a special opportunity for our players. What were some of your favorite moments from the event, and what did it mean to see the players enjoying the experience?***

Q&A With Nick Druga Continued

“We have incredible partners in the Pittsburgh Riverhounds and FNB Stadium. Over the past three years, we've not only offered soccer training on the stadium pitch, but we've continued to grow the experience year after year. In the beginning, our goal was simple: to create a birthday-party atmosphere where every participant felt like all of their friends had shown up to celebrate with them. As the years have progressed, we've been able to provide a true VIP experience for our TOPSoccer families, including private parties in the pub, exclusive access to the tailgate zone, and, of course, the chance to take the field at halftime and compete in a shootout against Amo. This summer, we even added fireworks to cap off the evening, creating an unforgettable finale for our players and families.”

4. ***As PA West Soccer’s North District Director, what are some of the most exciting developments you’ve seen in youth soccer across the region, and where do you think there is still room to grow?***

“The North District has had the unique experience of having a director who brings the perspective gained from working with TOPSoccer families into district competition. At the Division 5 and 6 levels, the focus cannot be solely on wins, losses, or goal differential. It has to be about cultivating a positive and meaningful soccer experience for every player. With that philosophy in mind, I have encouraged collaboration among all of the North District clubs as we develop our leagues of play. Two years ago, we implemented a league-building meeting that brought club representatives together around a pair of long tables, complete with team cards containing pertinent information, recommended placement levels based on previous performance, and, of course, food. The process allowed clubs to proactively and collaboratively place teams in appropriate competitive environments, leading to measurable success and a better overall experience for players throughout the district.”

5. ***After watching the 2026 World Cup, was there a player, team, or moment that really stood out to you—and did it change the way you look at the game at all?***

“The Argentina vs. Cape Verde match was incredible to watch. Seeing Cape Verde step onto the field against an overwhelming favorite like Argentina and not only compete but push the match the distance and beyond was remarkable. Moments like that are a powerful reminder of what makes soccer special. On any given day, determination, belief, and teamwork can close the gap between giants and underdogs and create memories that stay with fans forever.”

Soccer News

- **Tyler Adams** has been named captain of the **U.S. Men's National Team** by head coach **Mauricio Pochettino** as the team begins its journey toward the 2030 FIFA World Cup. The 27-year-old midfielder previously captained the USMNT at the 2022 World Cup and has earned 60 international caps. Pochettino praised Adams as a strong leader and role model who embodies the team's philosophy and culture. **Adams will lead a new generation of U.S. players as the USMNT begins a new four-year cycle.**

Click here to read more on Mauricio Pochettino's captaincy decision.

- The **U.S. Women's National Team** faced world champions **Spain** in a pair of international friendlies, falling 2-0 in the opener before battling back for a thrilling 2-2 draw in the rematch. **Ashley Sanchez** and **Mallory Swanson** scored in the second half, with Swanson's 86th-minute equalizer capping the comeback in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Click here to read more on the USWNT and Spain friendlies.

- The **NWSL** regular season is entering its final stretch, with teams battling for postseason positioning. The **2026 NWSL Championship** is scheduled for **Nov. 21 at Audi Field in Washington, D.C.**

Click here to view the upcoming NWSL schedule.

- **U.S. Soccer** has launched **R90+**, a new referee development initiative focused on identifying and developing the next generation of American referees. The program aims to provide young officials with additional opportunities to grow their skills and advance within the game.

Click here to read more about U.S. Soccer and R90+.

October is Mental Health Awareness Month

NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Mental health is an important part of a child's overall well-being, both on and off the soccer field.

- **1 in 7 children** and teens ages 6–17 experience a mental health condition each year.
- **50%** of lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14.
- **75%** of lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 24.

Creating a supportive environment where young players feel comfortable talking, asking for help and being themselves can make a lasting difference. Coaches, teammates, parents and clubs all have an important role to play in supporting the mental well-being of young athletes.

Source: ***National Alliance on Mental Illness** (NAMI)*

Award Nominations Now Being Accepted!



PA West Soccer is proud to recognize the coaches, administrators, volunteers and TOPSoccer leaders who make a difference throughout Western Pennsylvania. Each year, these awards celebrate individuals who dedicate their time, knowledge and passion to helping players, clubs and communities grow through the game.

Nominations are now being accepted. Know someone who deserves to be recognized? Whether it's a coach who inspires their players, a volunteer who always goes the extra mile, or a leader who has made a lasting impact on the soccer community, we encourage you to submit a nomination and help shine a spotlight on their contributions.

Take a moment to recognize the people who make soccer special across Western Pennsylvania. **All nominations must be mailed to the PA West Soccer state office.** Help us celebrate those who make a difference by submitting your nominations today!

To submit your nominations, click here.

Mark Your Calendars!

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

2026

OCT 24— **Moonlight Madness**

NOV 13–15 — **PA West Soccer State Championships**

2027

JAN 1-3 — **PA West Soccer Futsal State Cup | Monroeville, PA**

MAR 20–21— **PA West Soccer State Championships**

JUN 26–27 — **USYS National Championships**

JUN 26-27 - **Presidents Cup Regionals**

***Both National Championships and Presidents Cup Regionals will be held in Ellicott City, MD. (U11–U12 Boys & Girls)**

YOUTH BOARD MEETINGS

**Meetings will be held at the State Office.*

2026

NOV 16 — **Youth Board Meeting** | 6:30–8:30 PM

2027

JAN 11 — **Youth Board Meeting** | 6:30–8:30 PM

MAR 8 — **Youth Board Meeting** | 6:30–8:30 PM

MAY 10 — **Youth Board Meeting** | 6:30–8:30 PM

JUL 12 — **Youth Board Meeting** | 6:30–8:30 PM

Moments Captured: New Photo Gallery!

PA West Soccer Association has refreshed its online photo gallery! With a new layout and easy navigation, it's now simpler than ever to explore our best photos from tournaments, programs, and PA West events across Western Pennsylvania.

Click here to visit the full PA West Soccer Photo Gallery.







State Staff

You can reach out to our staff at:

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Our office hours are open from 8:30-4:30 PM, Monday-Friday.

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