



OHIO  
SOCCER  
ASSOCIATION

## OHIO NORTH MEMBER FAQs

[Updated 11.17.20]

### **Q: How will the merger change the soccer landscape in Ohio?**

A: Ohio Soccer Association (OSA) will become the largest US Youth Soccer state association in the Midwest and amongst the largest in the United States. This new “mass” provides the platform for expanded statewide and local programming opportunities, expanded marketing opportunities, expanded outreach opportunities, expanded resource opportunities, and opportunities to efficiently streamline operations, processes, and programs.

### **Q: How will the merger improve the voice and role of clubs?**

A: In the OSA structure, each club will have a proportional number of votes, based on their size and the geographic location of their members. Under the new OSA “Code of Regulations” (formerly Ohio North’s Bylaws), both clubs and leagues will be viewed as full voting members, with equal opportunity to influence the political structure and operating policies.

### **Q: How do the OSA Code of Regulations differ from the Ohio North Bylaws?**

A: The new Code of Regulations were written to be as simple, flexible, and as inclusive as possible.

### **Q: How will rules and policies be applied?**

A: There will be statewide consistency in the application of rules, policies, etc. for our clubs and leagues, including processes such as permission to travel, guest players, tournaments and tournament teams, transfers, etc.

### **Q: Will there be changes to the play levels?**

A: Yes. There are currently two play levels in Ohio South (Recreational and Competitive) and five in Ohio North (TOPSoccer, Recreational, Recreational-Plus, Competitive and Premier). While the new play levels have not been finalized, one of the OSA operational goals is to make playing soccer as simple as possible.

### **Q: How will the changes in play levels impact my player fees?**

A: The impact on player registration fees will be determined by any changes in play levels.

### **Q: Will there still be dual carding?**

A: Dual carding will still be an option to serve the needs of our membership. OSA is confident members will want to participate in the programming that will be offered.

### **Q: How will the merger benefit the local Recreational programs?**

A: OSA will have a Technical Department dedicated to club development and member outreach. All members will have free access to age-related and ability-related coaching materials, in both printed and digital forms; information on programming Best Practices; the ability to host local clinics, presentations, and coaching education courses, both virtually and in-person; and access to coach and club development programs. The OSA Technical Department will initially feature three U.S. Soccer National Instructors with a collective wealth of experiences covering every level of youth soccer.

### **Q: How will the merger benefit the larger, more competitive clubs?**

A: The OSA Technical Department will initially feature three U.S. Soccer National Instructors with a collective wealth of experience covering the soccer continuum from entry-level youth to Division I

college. Clubs seeking to assess and review the technical aspects of their on-field operations will have access to these professionals as advisors, mentors, assessors, or instructors, as needed.

**Q: How will a combined Ohio South State League (OSSL) benefit Ohio North clubs?**

A: OSSL provides a high level of competition which will reduce the need for inter-state travel and the associated costs. The competition in OSSL is comparable to the GLC Premier II and First divisions and is a seasonal year commitment. The number of games is determined by the number of teams in an Age Group Division.

**Q: Is there potential for further expansion of OSSL?**

A: The OSSL expanded to two divisions for the 2020-2021 season. Further expansion is not imminent; however, possible, based on the number and quality of teams applying.

**Q: Will the Northern Conference continue?**

A: The Ohio North Northern Conference was launched during the 2020-2021 seasonal year and will continue to service teams in the northern part of the state who do not qualify for OSSL or who wish to play in a competitive league without extensive intra-state travel.

**Q: How will the merger impact Great Lakes Conference (GLC) qualifications?**

A: For the 2020-2021 season, Ohio North and Ohio South teams will qualify independently for GLC Premier and First Division slots. Beginning in the 2021-2022 season, the number of Premier 1 and Premier 2 slots for OSA will represent the aggregate number of slots currently earned by Ohio North and Ohio South. OSA teams will earn GLC slots through OSSL and the OSA State Cup. Additionally, a 13U division will be added beginning fall 2021. 13U teams will qualify by competing in both the 12U State Cup and OSSL.

**Q: What will be the structure of competition? Will it be modeled after State League or more of a travel-style structure? Or a hybrid? Will divisions be geographical, or will teams be asked to travel across the state for games?**

A: There will be multiple levels of competition, based on the ability and motivation of the participating teams. The Great Lakes Conference (GLC) is a regionally based league for the most competitive teams who participate in State Cup. The Ohio State Soccer League (OSSL) is a statewide league that contains many regional level teams looking to supplement their regional schedule with more "local" games. The philosophy behind community-based soccer is to schedule games against neighboring communities. That will not change. For the tier of teams between OSSL and community soccer, leagues will evolve as the OSA "Big Tent" evolves. This tier of teams will play in geographic areas (north and south) and grouped by competitive level.

**Q: How will the merger impact qualification for the US Youth Soccer Midwest Regional Championships and US Youth Midwest Presidents Cup?**

A: For the 2020-2021 season, Ohio North and Ohio South teams will qualify independently for the Midwest Regional Championships and Midwest Presidents Cup. Beginning with the 2021-2022 season, all OSA teams will earn Midwest Regional Championship and Midwest Presidents Cup slots through the OSA Cup Series based on the assumption there are no changes to the format of these US Youth Soccer events. US Youth Soccer is currently working on a re-imagining for both the National Championship Series and National Presidents Cup.

**Q: When and where will the OSA Cup Series be held?**

A: For the 2020-2021 season, Ohio North and Ohio South will operate separate Cup Series competitions for both State Cup and Presidents Cup. The timing, location, and format of the first OSA Cup Series for the 2021-2022 season (season 2020-2021) will be determined over the next few months.

**Q: How will the merger impact ODP, selection process and the number of players identified for the US Youth Soccer Midwest ID Camp?**

A: For the 2020-2021 season, Ohio North and Ohio South will operate separate ODP programs and will each send their top players to the Midwest ID Camp. Beginning in the 2021-2022 season, OSA will combine ODP programming which will preserve some of the features of the two current programs while adding new opportunities for top players to train and compete against each other.

**Q: Will ODP be connected to the MLS teams?**

A: Yes. OSA expects to announce exciting new ODP programming as part of the new and evolving US Youth Soccer national partnership with MLS.

**Q: Will there still be TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer)?**

A: Yes. We are excited for the continued growth of TOPSoccer programming throughout the state and the ability to share staffing and resources.

**Q: Larger is not always better, but certainly means more automated and will be further from the leadership. How will this improve member services?**

A: There is a renewed focus on serving and reinvesting back into our members. We will be expanding our member services staff to provide greater value and do as much “heavy lifting” as possible administratively to take the burden off of our clubs and leagues so that they can focus on the players.

**Q: What registration system will be used?**

A: The plan is to stay with Demosphere as both Ohio North and Ohio South currently use the system. We are in the process of reviewing what went well and what the pain points were for our members so that we can work with Demosphere to provide our members with the best platform and registration process in the country. With an OSA membership base more than 90K players, we have a greater voice to ensure significant improvements for the 2020-2021 seasonal year.

**Q: What system or process will be used to manage the participant safety compliance requirements (risk management)?**

A: The plan is to stay with Player’s Health as both Ohio North and Ohio South currently use the system as their professional compliance arm. We are in the process of reviewing what went well and what the pain points were for our members so that we can work with Player’s Health to provide our members with the best risk management system in the country to provide a safe soccer environment for all participants. With an OSA membership base more than 90K players, we have a greater voice to ensure significant improvements for the 2020-2021 seasonal year.

**Q: Where will the State Office be located?**

A: OSA will be managed from two offices. The southern office will be based in the Cincinnati area and the northern office will be based in the Cleveland area.