



United States soccer pyramid



- A tiered system of professional and amateur leagues organized by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).
- Franchise and expansion model without traditional promotion and relegation, though some lower-tier leagues are working toward implementing it

Professional Divisions (Men's)

D1: Major League Soccer (MLS)

D2: USL Championship (USLC)

D3: USL League One (USL1), MLS NEXT Pro, and the National Independent Soccer Association (NISA)

Amateur & Semi-Professional Tiers (Men's)

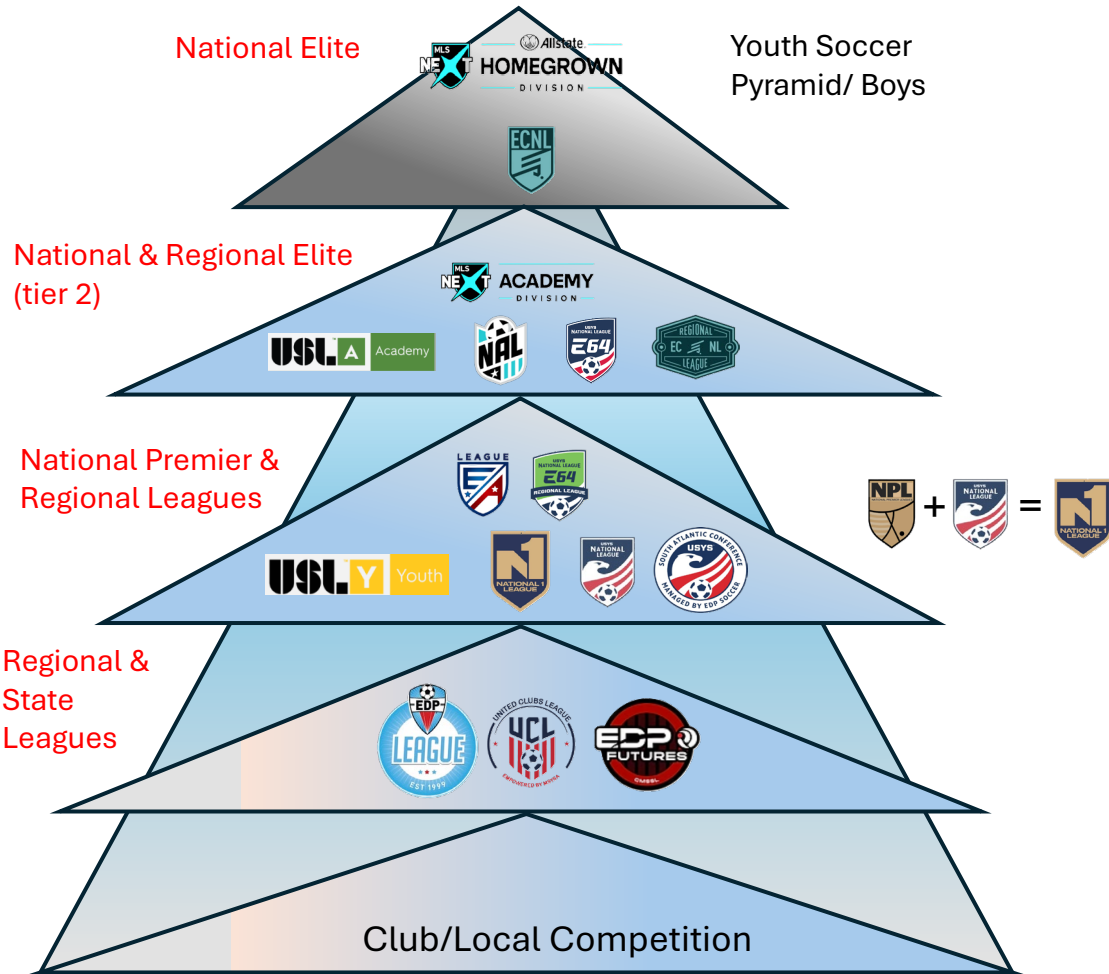
Tier IV: Leagues like USL League Two (USL2), National Premier Soccer League (NPSL), and the United Premier Soccer League (UPSLL). These predominantly feature collegiate and aspiring professional players.

Tier V & Below: Highly localized and regional state-level leagues sanctioned by the USSF

Our mission is to create pathways for players to reach their highest potential by providing exposure to professional clubs, collegiate programs, and elite competitive environments that foster growth both on and off the field.



US Youth Soccer – Overview



Governing Bodies:

1. US Youth Soccer (USYS)

- It is one of the largest and most prominent governing bodies for youth soccer in the US. It operates through 55 state associations, each overseeing local leagues and competitions
- It offers a range of programs, including the ODP (Olympic Development Program), which identifies and develops players for national teams.

2. US Club Soccer

- It is another major governing body, known for its **National Premier Leagues** (NPL) and the **Elite Clubs National League** (ECNL)
- It also runs player identification programs such as the **Player Development Programs** (PDP) and the id2 **National Identification and Development Program**.

** Note: U.S. Soccer and US Youth Soccer recently *announced a plan for a new partnership model* that will ultimately lead to the integration of US Youth Soccer into U.S. Soccer over the coming years.

- Other organizations: **American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)** and **Soccer Association for Youth (SAY)** focus more on recreational soccer but also have travel teams competing in other leagues

All of these platforms provide the highest level of competition and development, with higher level leagues (Elite) providing exposure for college recruitment and professional pathways. While these are the general structural definitions, many local clubs use "Elite," "Premier," and "Select" as interchangeable marketing terms to differentiate between multiple competitive teams within their own organization.



US Youth Soccer - League Types

Club-based

- Require an entire organization (a club) to field competitive teams across multiple age groups, focusing on the development of the whole club rather than just one specific squad.
- Provides a more standardized, long-term pathway for a player, offering better opportunities for college scouts who can evaluate multiple age groups at once during club showcases.
- **How Clubs Qualify:** Acceptance is based on a club's overall strength and history across multiple age divisions.
- **Structure:** The entire club participates in the same league structure, promoting consistent coaching standards and player development across all age groups.
- **League Examples:** Formats like the ECNL or the Elite 64 are highly club-centric, requiring organizations to commit a full slate of teams

Team-based

- Allows individual teams to qualify based on their own on-field performance.
- Often more accessible for independent or smaller clubs that have one standout, highly competitive team.
- **How Teams Qualify:** Individual teams earn their place in the league or advance to higher tiers (such as the National 1 League) based purely on their own competitive merit and tournament play, regardless of how other teams in their club perform.
- **Independence:** Strong teams from smaller clubs can compete at top levels without needing the entire club structure to qualify.
- **Progression:** Success leads to advancement into higher regional tiers (e.g., Premier 1 or Premier 2 divisions) and national playoff events
 - i.e., system of promotion and relegation based on on-field performance rather than a pay-to-play ladder as the professional and amateur leagues

Elite Leagues (Tier 1)

These are the premier national development platforms. Players aiming to play NCAA Division I soccer or turn professional typically target these leagues.

Key Platforms: [MLS NEXT](#), Girls Academy (GA), and the ECNL.

Competition Level: Extremely high; rosters are formed through highly competitive tryouts, often pulling talent from vast regions.

College Exposure: Unmatched. Tournaments and showcases are heavily scouted by college coaches.

Commitment & Travel: Year-round commitment requiring significant travel, with teams often flying across the country for showcase events and national playoffs.

Premier Leagues (Tier 2 & 3)

"Premier" often refers to high-level regional or state leagues. It is the most common competitive level for dedicated club players who want strong coaching but may not be on the national elite track.

Key Platforms: The National Premier Leagues (NPL) and Elite Academy (EA).

Competition Level: High-level competitive play, but the talent pool and club standards can vary significantly depending on the region.

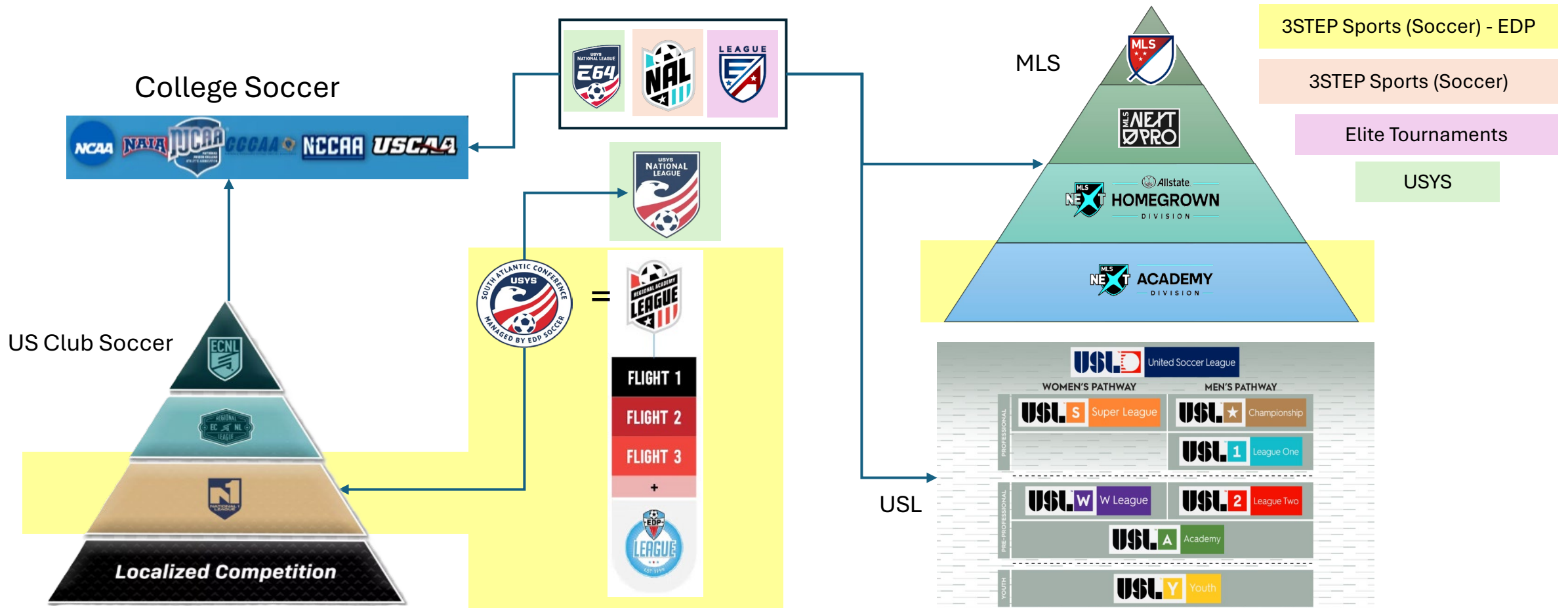
College Exposure: Still provides exposure through regional showcases, but generally relies more on club-driven recruitment efforts rather than automatic national scouting.

Commitment & Travel: More geographically compact. Travel is typically confined to your state or surrounding states, making it more affordable and less time-consuming than Elite leagues.

In U.S. youth soccer, Elite leagues represent the highest national and regional tiers, built for college recruiting and professional development. Premier leagues are typically a tier just below, operating as highly competitive regional or state-level platforms focused on skill building with less demanding travel.



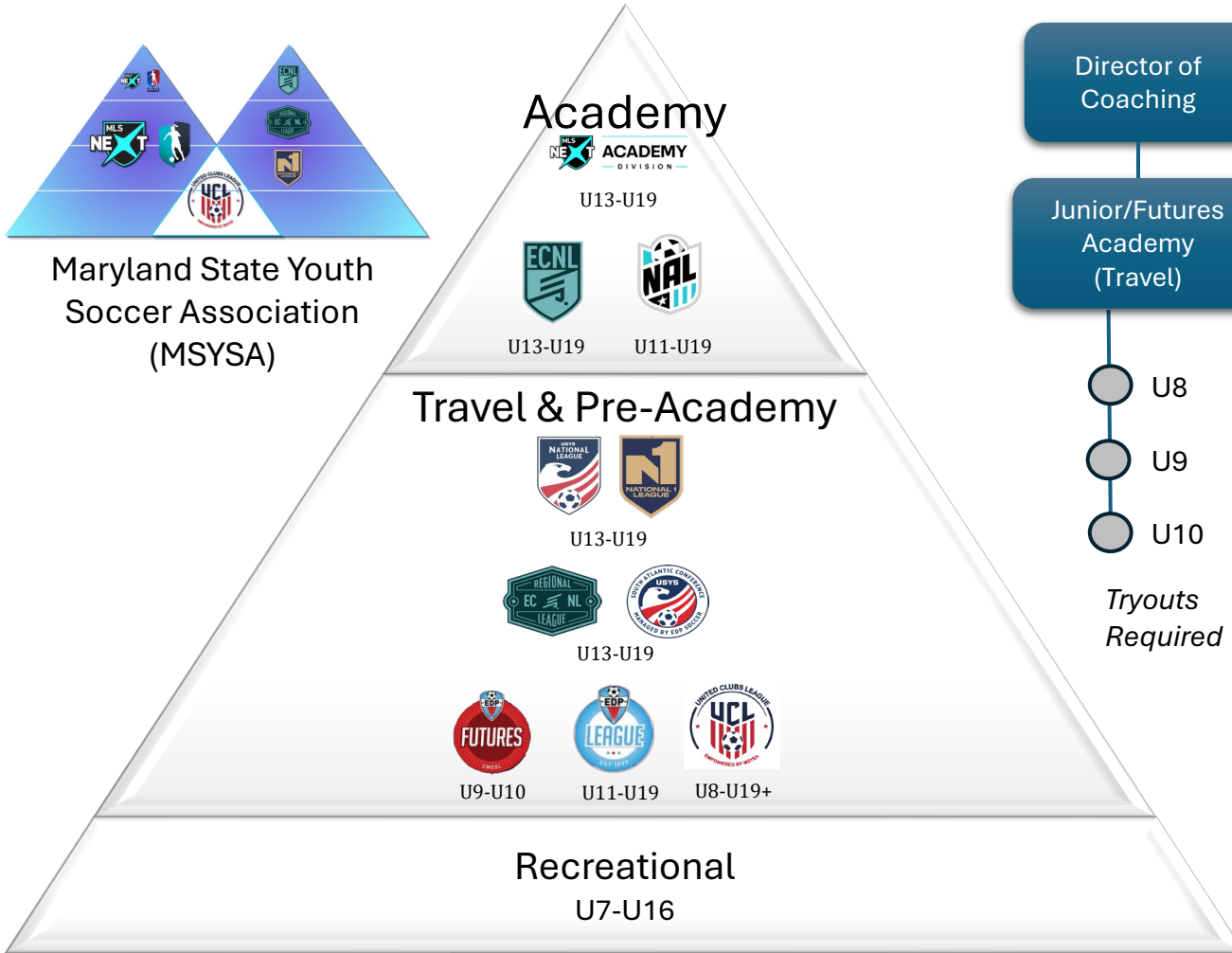
Youth Soccer - Tiered Pyramid Organization



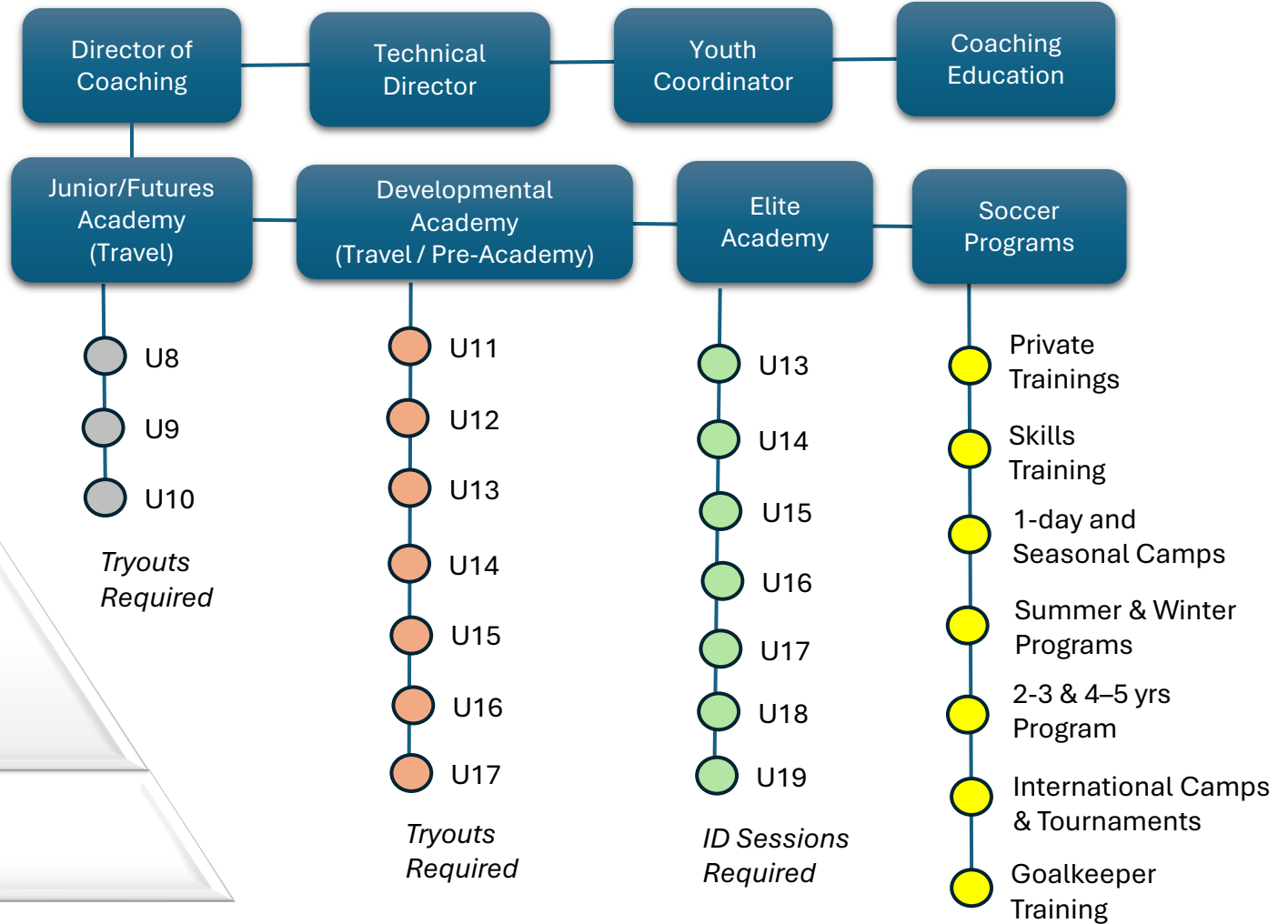
Our club's objective extends beyond providing players with exposure to college and professional pathways. We are committed to developing each player by placing them in highly competitive environments that maximize their technical, tactical, physical, and mental growth. In support of this mission, we are establishing relationships and collaborations with professional organizations and colleges, identifying players with the potential to compete at the next level. When appropriate, we have submitted recommendations on behalf of our players to professional clubs and colleges, creating opportunities for evaluations and advancement.



Cosmo Stars SC - Structure



Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA)



We are currently developing our teams and expanding opportunities to expose our players to high-level competition while increasing their visibility to college coaches and professional scouts. Our focus is on creating meaningful competitive environments that support each player's long-term development in and out of the field and provides a pathway to the next level.