



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

### **PHILOSOPHY:**

#### **What is the USA mission & philosophy?**

The USA mission is to provide high quality, high competition, and affordable soccer to area youth with the guiding principle of: ***In the best interests of the kids.*** In keeping with that mission, we strive to maximize access to club-level soccer to area players. While focusing on building individual and team soccer skills and performance we maintain a constant eye on building complete athlete citizens. An underlying concentration of all our Club activities is to foster player character by emphasizing sportsmanship and dedication while encouraging them to be involved with their schools, churches, and community.

#### **What is the USA perspective to travel soccer?**

USA insists on positive, encouraging behavior from coaches, from parents, and from players during practices, games, and from the sidelines. This models the same good attitude and good sportsmanship that we will develop and expect from our players as well. We continue to grow and develop in our coaching staff and methods so that we can nurture our children in their personal and soccer skill development, and their enjoyment of the game.

#### **What are the Club's feelings about parental involvement?**

The USA Club is parent-driven with a majority of the team coaches and managers also being parents. We openly embrace family support to teams, open communication and feedback, a look to families to form the team foundation - as such, we encourage parental involvement at all levels of the Club.

#### **What is the fundamental business organization of the USA?**

USA is a parent-driven, 501c3 not-for-profit corporation. As parents, neighbors and friends, we have a vested interest in creating the best possible experience for our children. This meshes well with both our mission (by keeping the cost affordable) and with our guiding principle (by maintaining a pure focus on promoting our players).

**Is there any information (policies) that is “required information” to be aware of?**

Yes, the Club emphasizes that each adult participant (parent, coach, manager, etc.) become familiar with and embrace the information provided in the POLICIES section of the USA website. If access to the website is not available, these materials will be provided in hardcopy format upon request.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

**Where is the USA Club centered?**

USA has been in the Holland, MI area for over a decade and generally serves soccer players in the Holland, Zeeland, West Olive, and Hamilton areas. We also have a limited number of teams in Byron Center.

**How long has USA been around?**

USA was founded in 1998 by a group of parents in Holland, MI who wanted club-level soccer available to their children.

**What league does USA play under?**

USA teams play in the Grand Valley Soccer Association (GVSA).

**TEAM INFORMATION:**

**What levels of soccer does USA offer?**

USA offers select-level travel soccer teams for all ages from U-8 through U-19, for both boys and girls. Our USA Juniors program is focused on U6 and U7.

**What age levels are the USA teams?**

USA offers teams from 7 years old through 18 years old. Our USA Juniors program is for 5 and 6 year olds.

**Does the USA offer teams for both boys and girls?**

USA offers teams for both boys and girls at all age levels. The Club does not offer co-ed teams.

**When are teams formed?**

USA teams are formed through tryouts in mid-June.

**Are tryouts open to all players?**

USA holds open, age & gender-specific tryouts for all interested players.

**What are tryout evaluators looking for during tryouts?**

USA tryout evaluators assess tryout participants predominately on individual soccer skill, apparent coachability, willingness to participate, and apparent attitude.

**How are USA teams formed?**

USA teams are formed based on skill/attitude levels such that teams of players with similar skills and dedication are formed. Secondly, recognition may be paid to rather non-technical factors (e.g., team continuity/balance, two season vs. single season player composition, balance of multi-activity players within a team, etc.).

**Can there be multiple teams at each age/gender group?**

Yes, historically we support multiple teams at each age and gender group based on a skill-level organization.

**Can individuals 'play up' to older age groups?**

USA does not regularly embrace players to 'play up' as it is not generally a positive developmental approach. However, some individuals do benefit from playing on older teams. In order for a player to be considered for an older teams, tryout evaluators (or coaches or Club administrators) must recognize that the individual plays at a level equal to or above that of the top 3-4 players currently participating at the **older age group**.

**How do I request that my child be considered to 'play up'?**

Again, the decision to 'play up' is completely at the discretion of the Club management. In order to be consider for playing up, that player must attend tryouts and register at their age-appropriate group (e.g., if they are U8 they report in at U8). At that time, the parent or guardian would tell the Club representative of their desire and that will be noted on the tryout registration paperwork. At that time, the player would report to their age-appropriate group (again, a U8 player would initially go to the U8 tryout). At some point, if the assessing coach feels that the player may be a candidate to play, they will release the player to go to the next age group tryout (e.g., U8 player going to the U9 tryout). At that time, the older age group assess will be able to see if playing up is appropriate. In this manner, both age groups have a chance to evaluate the player. The final decision will be made during team formation decisions.

**How will I know if I made a team?**

The Club makes every effort to personally contact each candidate within 24-48 of the tryouts with their status on a team. This contact may be by phone or email. In some cases, team formation may take longer to finalize, but in any event, contact will be made to provide status.

**What does the Club expect as a commitment?**

The league specifies a "commitment date". When a player is contacted by the Club on or after that date, it is expected that the player will accept a position in the Club immediately. Failure to do that may result in the player losing their spot on the team (new or legacy players, alike). If the player does not make a commitment the player may be placed on the age group waiting list with other players that were unable attend tryouts. Placement on a team will then be at the discretion of the Club. There is no financial commitment. It is based on the good faith word of the player (family).

**What happens if I want to play but can't attend tryouts?**

There is no replacement for attending tryouts. Although no guarantees can be made, in order to best ensure a spot on a USA team a player must attend tryouts. If a candidate cannot attend tryouts they must complete the USA Tryout Registration Form and mark the absentee box. The form must be submitted to the Club by JUNE 14th. It can be submitted by mail to P.O. Box 8201, Holland, MI 49422 or scanned and emailed to operations@usasoccerholland.com . Upon receipt of the completed form, the candidate will be placed on a wait list for their age group. Placement of the absentee players will be at the discretion of the Club to meet the needs of individual teams. If the form is not received prior to the stated date, the candidate may not be considered for a team. Again, this is at the discretion of the Club.

**What happens if I played for USA last year but can't attend tryouts?**

For players that have played on a USA team the previous year but are unable to attend tryouts for whatever reason (vacation, mission trip, alternate tryout, etc.), the player's coach must be notified and the following process followed. If a candidate cannot attend tryouts they must complete the USA Tryout Registration Form and mark the absentee box. The form must be submitted to the Club by JUNE 14th. It can be submitted by mail to P.O. Box 8201, Holland, MI 49422 or scanned and emailed to operations@usasoccerholland.com . Upon receipt of the completed form, the candidate will be placed on a wait list for their age group. This list will be communicated with the age group coaches to confirm that they were aware of the situation. If the form is not received prior to the stated date, the candidate may not be considered for a team. Again, this is at the discretion of the Club.

Placement of the absentee players will be at the discretion of the Club to meet the needs of individual teams. Roster spots cannot be held on past teams for players that cannot attend tryouts. Legacy players are in a better position than new players as the coaches know their abilities and placement on a team is easier. However, there is not guarantee that the player will be rostered with their old team.

**What if I am interested in joining the Club after tryouts (or if my absentee form is received after the deadline date, or I do not take a roster spot and change my mind)?**

If a candidate wishes to join the Club after tryouts, if the absentee form is received after the deadline, or if a player does not accept a roster spot and later changes their mind, the candidate will still be placed on the wait list. However, the player will be maintained second to those that were received prior to the deadline. Again, in any event, placement is at the discretion of the Club.

**Does the Club hold alternate or make up tryouts?**

The Club does not hold official alternate or make up tryouts. Due to league regulations we cannot hold tryouts prior to the open tryouts. Further, due to the league time constraints, we cannot delay team formation after tryouts. In some cases, depending on tryout turnout, team needs, or other circumstances age groups may call secondary tryouts. This is at the discretion of the Club.

### **How is the wait list managed?**

The wait list is managed at the discretion of the Club. Candidates on the wait list may be placed on a team based on a number of factors, not necessarily the order in which they were received. These factors may include, but not be limited to, being a legacy USA player, player skill, results of an alternate tryout, etc.

## **USA PLAYING SEASONS:**

### **In how many seasons do USA teams play?**

Most USA teams participate in two seasons of soccer (fall and spring). Older teams may only participate in single seasons as many participate in their respective school teams.

### **When are the USA seasons?**

Fall practices starts in August. Games are played in September and October. Spring practice starts in March. Games are played in April, May and the first part of June.

### **How many games are in each season?**

Each season has 8 games (4 home, 4 away), which are usually on Saturdays (or some Sundays).

### **Where are the games (how far do USA teams travel)?**

USA teams generally travel in west Michigan and rarely exceeds an hour's drive. Some teams may participate in tournaments which may be out of the regular season area.

### **Does USA require participation in tournaments?**

Although the Club feels that tournament participation is a great way to grow team chemistry, broaden individual experience, and serve as an ambassador for the Club and community, we do not require specific participation. We do urge teams to consider participation. The final decision is typically guided by the coach and sensibilities of the parent group.

### **Do USA teams play year round?**

The only official seasons for USA teams are the fall and following spring season. A majority of our teams do play indoor during the winter. Participation in winter play is driven by the individual teams.

## **USA PRACTICES:**

### **How many practices do USA teams attend?**

Typically USA teams have two practices per week, with each practice lasting 60 - 90 minutes.

### **Where are USA practices?**

Practices for USA teams are held at our home fields at Helder Park near Zeeland.

**Does USA have a practice vs. play policy?**

The USA has a firm focus on character and dedication. This focus is also balanced with our desire to support well-rounded individuals. These two concepts are often put at odds. As such it is expected that all players attend practice and come prepared and focused. It is also expected that players practice skills outside of practice in order to foster their own development. At the same time, we encourage individuals to participate in other activities. However, it must be made clear to the player and parents, that they have made a commitment to a team and organization and must not take advantage of our Club's flexibility. If players fail to attend practice it should be expected that they will have only minimal required play time. These decisions are at the discretion of the team coach. If players fail to practice on their own time it should be expected that they will not develop their skills and overall ability and results will be limited.

**Are there special training opportunities for USA players?**

Yes, and this is constantly expanding and evolving. Each year, before the start of the fall season, the USA and Hope College team up to provide a 3-day USA-ONLY team camp. During the winter session, the Club offers technical training tailored to specific age groups. Beyond that, the USA hosts the Demarcus Beasley National Soccer School in late June at our practice fields in Holland. The Club also fully supports the Hope Soccer Camp that is offered in mid-late June each year.

**COACHING:**

**Does USA have a Director of Coaching (DOC)?**

USA has a dedicated Director of Coach and Player Development with decades of experience as a profession player and collegiate player. She has years of coaching experience at all levels from developmental recreational programs through high-level competitive teams.

We also have a dedicated Technical Director. He also holds decades of experience of play and coaching at all levels of the game and hold multiple nationally-recognized coaching licenses and certificates.

**Does the USA have a comprehensive approach to coaching and player development?**

Under the guidance of our DOC the Club has a documented set of development guidelines for players and coaching. These guidelines are based on the most current offering provided by the United States Youth Soccer Association.

**Who forms the team coaching staff?**

Many of our coaches, assistant coaches, and managers are parents that embraced the Club's mission and now fuel the growth of our teams and players. A majority of our team coaches and managers are parents of players in the Club. Many of the coaches have decades of high-level coaching experience. The individuals serve as advisors and mentors to developing coaches under the guidance of our Director of Coaching.

### **Are all the coaches team parents?**

Not all of the team coaches are parents with players on that team. Increasingly our overall coaching core is comprised of post college graduates/young professionals that simply love teaching children and the game of soccer. Additionally, many of our coaches are individuals with college-age children that have coached for years and want to continue coaching. Adding to the mix, many of our teams, although headed by parent-coaches, are assisted by non-parent coaches. This balance and blend of background, skill, and perspective when supported by the resources of the Club provide a unique and well rounded soccer experience.

### **Does USA provide coaches?**

USA does provide coaches for Club teams. From time to time, as a parent-driven organization we do look to parents to coach or identify coaches for teams. Overall, our experience has been positive using this model as we find that coaches are truly dedicated to the teams and players and strive to grow their own skill as coaches along with the team. When coupled with the resources the Club provides, pure, positive results generally result.

### **What happens if there is a team without a coach?**

In recent years, the Club has witnessed several occasions where teams form after tryouts that are beyond the number of coaches from the previous year. In these occasions we implement our 'no coach, no team' approach. We present the situation to the parents of that team and enable them to identify a coach from the team. Generally, we get a number of volunteers from the team. From that point, the Club provides the necessary resources and tools to coaches, managers, and parents to create a positive experience. We Have Never Had To Turn Away A Team – thanks to the parents!

### **What happens if there is a coach without a team?**

If there is an individual that wishes to be a coach or assistant coach but does not have a team, the Club DOC will assess the best fit and coordinate their involvement.

### **Does the USA pay its coaches?**

USA does recognize the effort, time, and dedication of its coaches by offering a stipend that is the equivalent of the Club fee of a player at the age group that they are coaching with an added stipend for two-season coaches.

### **Are USA coaches licensed?**

USA coaches hold State and Federally-recognized coaching licenses and are supported by the Club's ever-expanding coaching development resources.

### **Does USA offer coaches training?**

In addition to requiring coach licensing, the Club provides multiple opportunities each year for coaches to participate in training sessions presented by the Club DOC. The Club also fully supports the pursuit of other training that individual coaches wish to undertake.

**Do the coaches have to pay for their training/licensing?**

USA pays 100% of the costs undertaken by coaches in pursuit of their training and licensing. Coaches that attend the required licensing or pursue additional training for the betterment of the Club will be reimbursed any costs. Prior approval for training programs beyond the required licensing must get prior approval.

**How does one get involved as a coach for a team?**

If you are interested in joining the Club as a coach or assistant coach, simply contact the Club DOC at [DOC@usasoccerholland.com](mailto:DOC@usasoccerholland.com) . He will share all the details, answer questions, and coordinate your connection with a team.

**ADMINISTRATION AND COSTS:**

**Where can I get information about the USA Club or team?**

The USA website is the best source for current Club information. To get answers to specific questions, send an email to [info@usasoccerholland.com](mailto:info@usasoccerholland.com) . Alternatively a Club coach or administrator is always available to answer questions or coordinate information.

**What is the USA Club website?**

The USA Club website is [www.usasoccerholland.com](http://www.usasoccerholland.com) .

**What paperwork is required to join a USA team after tryouts?**

To engage in a USA team each player must complete and submit a GVSA registration form, medical waiver, and uniform order form (if the player needs to purchase a new uniform or parts there of).

**Where can the required registration forms be located?**

All required registration/uniform forms are located on the USA website under the JOIN USA and PARENT section, where they can be downloaded for use. If access to the website is not available, these materials will be provided in hardcopy format upon request. Alternatively, the forms are available from any USA Club administrator.

**Where are completed forms to be submitted?**

All completed registration/uniform forms need to be sent to the Club post office box at P.O. Box 8201, Holland, MI, 49422. In some instances special arrangements may be necessary to speed the process. These cases will be coordinated between the team coach and Club administrators.

**What is the player fee for USA?**

The player costs for the competition year are tiered by age group and can be located on the JOIN USA page of our website.

**Are there other mandatory costs (uniform cost)?**

The other main cost for the USA (for newly joining players) is a uniform kit (home & away jerseys, socks, shorts, and practice jersey). Uniform kits are purchased every other year. New uniform kits will be purchased by every player within the Club for the 2018/2019 season. These will be maintained for two competition seasons. The next club-wide uniform purchase will be for the 2018/2019 competition year. As such, only new players entering the Club must purchase a kit for the 2019/2020 year. Returning players may reuse their kit.

**Are there other required costs (camp cost)?**

The Club also provides a USA-only Club Camp hosted by Hope College Mens Soccer Team staff in late August. The cost of this Club-required camp is \$50 per player. In the winter, several weeks prior to the start of the spring season, the Club provides a multi-week, USA-only Technical Training program at the Soccer Stop Sportsplex. The cost of this camp is \$50 per player.

**Does the USA offer financial aid?**

If there is a financial hardship, financial aide may be available. A simple request form must be completed and submitted to the Club President. This form is located on the DOCUMENTS page of our website.