THE UNITED STATES ECOSYSTEM

Overview: U.S. Soccer's governance & membership

U.S. Soccer's governance model is built on a membership structure that spans 118 diverse organizations including professional leagues, youth & adult amateur organizations, and disability organizations

The current structure was shaped by **U.S. Soccer's role under both FIFA and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC)**, which mandates democratic governance, including athlete representation

Member Type
Professional Leagues (5)
National Associations (4)
State Associations (90)
National Affiliates (6)
Other Affiliates (3)
Disability Service Organizations (DSOs) (9)
Associate Members (1)

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We organize our ecosystem into segments to better understand participant needs at different age & stages

Segment	RECREATIONAL	COMPETITIVE	PRE-PROFESSIONAL	PROFESSIONAL	ADULT AMATEUR	DISABILITY
Summary	Playing for the foundational understanding of the game or as a leisure / social activity	Increased competition and development with an aspiration to reach next level	Highest level of amateur competition and development with a focus on reaching the pro level	Highest level of competition with focus on results and career growth in domestic and int'l competitions	Adult players in lifelong or competitive leagues	Inclusive programming for athletes with disabilities
Partici-pants	Millions	Hundreds of Thousands	10,000+	~4,500	Hundreds of Thousands	Thousands

The majority of U.S. Soccer membership is **youth soccer**

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Recreational Youth Segment Overview

The beginning of the soccer journey for most players: fun, accessible, community-driven & foundational.

Characteristics

- Lower cost (~$100 - $350 per year)
- Volunteer coaches (typically parents)
- Represents majority of soccer in the U.S. (millions of players)
- Teams formed by age/geography, all games at local fields
- No tryouts or skill-based placement (1- 2 practices / week)
- Lower training requirements for coaches and admins

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Competitive Youth Segment Overview

Players seeking higher levels of competition & development beyond casual recreational play

Characteristics

- Typically, higher cost than rec (~$750 - $5,000+ per year)
- Mix of Paid / Professional coaches and volunteer coaches
- Hundreds of thousands of players (highest growth segment) (U9 +)
- Increased travel for practices, games, and tournaments
- Tryouts & skill-based placement (2-4 practices per week)
- Variability in standards, coaching requirements, level of play

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Pre-Professional Segment Overview

Players at the highest amateur level of the game, often preparing and striving to play professionally

Characteristics

- Mix of free academies (tied to professional clubs) and fee-based, private clubs ($2,500+ per year)
- Mostly paid coaches, many full-time coaches with C licenses (or higher)
- Thousands of players (U13+)
- Greatest level of travel for both league games and tournament/showcase events
- Scouting, Tryouts, & skill-based placement (3-5 practices per week)
- Best vs best environments to identify, develop, and promote high potential players & professionals

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Adult-Amateur Segment Overview

Non-professional players 18+ continuing to play the game they love across casual and competitive

Characteristics

- Typically, between $50 - $150 / season for casual & competitive adult amateur soccer
- Typically, only have coaches at the more competitive / pre-pro level
- Millions of players across affiliated and unaffiliated play
- Majority of play is local at a few fields. More competitive leagues may include regional travel
- Mix of open registration and tryout / scouting based on level of play
- Mix of small sided, full field, and other flexible formats at every stage of adulthood

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Disability Soccer Organization (DSO) Overview

Characteristics

- Run programming and oversee development pathways within their disability category
- Host competitions and run National teams
- Mix of small sided, indoor, and other flexible formats for the joy of the game that best suits the category
- U.S. Soccer's role is governance, support, and amplification – not direct day-to-day program delivery

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