

Enhancing & Optimizing the U9 and U10 Experience within MAYSA

Beginning Fall 2013

January 23, 2012
Rocky Rococo Pizzeria
Madison, WI

Current Dilemma

- **Excessive travel** – not uncommon for there to be travel in excess of one hour, one way for a single match.
- **Restrictive player movement** – players assigned to teams based almost exclusively by age, not ability, which limits player development.
- **Limited club collaboration** – neighboring clubs could be even greater stewards of the game.

Overall, it is sub-optimal and not player-centric.

9/7/11

Chris,

This is the problem....

Greetings! My 9 year old is involved in MAYSA soccer for the first time this year. I have enjoyed many aspects of the program, but there is one nagging question.

The travel seems a bit premature given the level of ability and our expectations of the child's experience. The coach's philosophy is the same as mine, have fun and enjoy improving your skills. In my opinion, with this as the bar, we don't need to leave Baraboo to accomplish this goal. Even if competition was more important, I think we could put together a competitive schedule without leaving Baraboo. Or, if we wanted to play other towns, why isn't Sauk City (15 miles away) on the schedule rather than Beaver Dam (60 miles)? Not only is there more expense in driving, but lost weekend time because we spent two hours driving to have our average kids play average kids in a town an hour away. It is not like the effort is rewarded by matching up remote talent. This aspect of the program doesn't feel very thoughtful. Having grown up in a family that was very athletic and accomplished, I think the goals of the program can be achieved without lots of travel.

....we get lots of emails like this

Examples in MAYSA U9&10 Leagues

- Stoughton to Mt Horeb – 42 minutes, 30 miles
- Sauk Prairie to Sun Prairie – 46 minutes, 30 miles
- Portage to Sauk Prairie – 45 minutes, 32 miles
- Oregon to Portage – 60 minutes, 32 miles
- Janesville to Verona – 56 minutes, 45 miles
- Milton to Mt Horeb – 68 minutes, 50 miles

These are one-way drive times & distances. Year to year, season to season these are typical drive times.

This is a solution.....

“One trend I encourage, which has been successful in other large countries such as France and Germany that committed to youth development and which can now also be seen here in the USA, is to regionalize programs. This will cut down on costs, allow the youth players and their families to have more normal lifestyles, and provide for more development opportunities.”

Jurgen Klinsman – US Men’s National Team Coach

- Former Germany Men’s National Team Coach

- Player – Winner of World Cup, European Championships, etc. etc. winner

Why Do Players Play?

US Youth Soccer

1. To Have Fun
2. To Be With Their Friends
3. To Make New Friends
4. To Improve and Learn
5. To Feel Good
6. To Wear the Stuff

What is not on this list?

“Most children play to have fun with their friends. They do not play to entertain the adults, boost the adults ego, or improve the family social status within the community.”

Dr. Penny Adams-Krause, University of Missouri

The Enhanced and U9 & U10 Leagues

1. Regional Cooperatives – clubs in three separate geographic areas working together.

- Travel is limited to within the Cooperative
- MAYSA will lead and guide league formation in direct collaboration with clubs in each Cooperative. A MAYSA representative will guide the consensus-driven decisions.
- Set the league and agree upon number of teams and which teams.
- A league can be between 5 and 10 teams and each team gets 8 games.
- MAYSA will run the schedule based on information provided by the Regional Collaboration Lead.

2. The Schedules

- Regional Cooperatives will be highly encouraged, but not required, to have play dates on regular days of the week: e.g., Saturday morning or afternoon.
- It will be beneficial to stack games back-to-back-to back at a given location for greater efficiencies
- Also encouraged are one-to-two mini-festivals where teams play two games: one game, followed by a one-game break, then the second game. This will consolidate two matches into one trip and free-up more weekends.
- Scores reported, but no league tables are kept.

3. “Team” Formation

- Yes, players can still be on ‘teams’ but are free to move across teams within the club:
 - Strong U9 can play amongst U10
 - A team short on players can borrow from another team within their club. The Club Pass rule/policy.
- Coaches and clubs will be entrusted to make wise and responsible decisions with regard to player movement.
- Teams are generally U9 and U10 but, when safe and appropriate, may be in a league together. It is a decision for the Cooperative.

Why This is Better...Much Better

1. Clubs and coaches can be more responsive to variance in player abilities.
2. Clubs are responsible to each other
3. Children can be placed according to ability and not exclusively by age.
4. Facilitates and encourages club collaboration.
5. More time and money for players and their parents to enjoy family, other sports, school or...more soccer.
6. More consistent with USSF Best Practices.

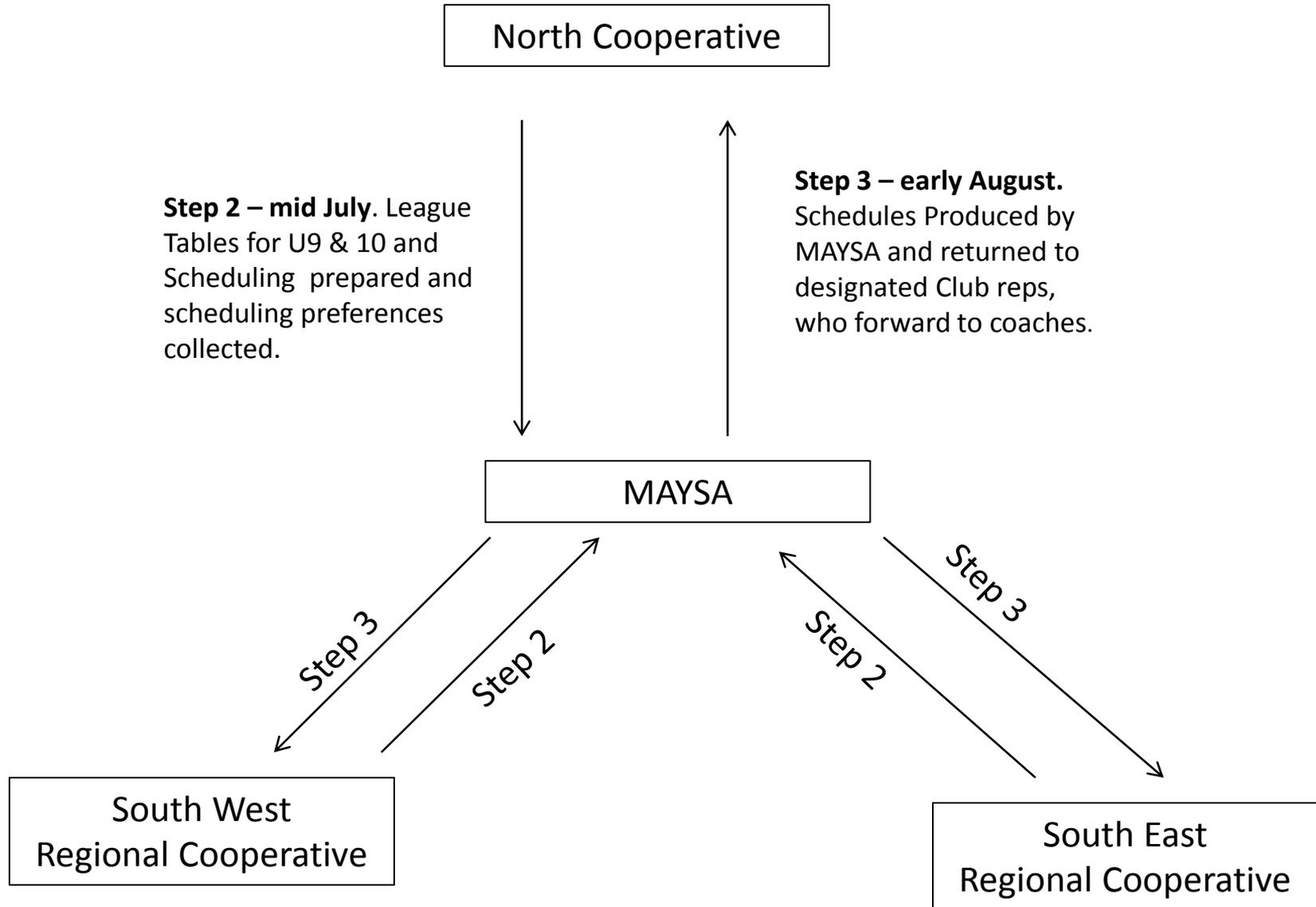
6. Helps in the promotion of 'club culture' and sense of community.
7. Regular play-days mean club leadership/coaching director can observe player development, better communicate with parents, etc.
8. Much easier for referee assignment and mentoring.
9. Clubs may be able to generate some revenue via concessions by hosting a series of games at a their home venue.

The Process

Step 1 – begins late June/early July for Fall season

- Clubs in each Regional Cooperative convene to take inventory of their U9 and U10 teams. At least one, but no more than two, reps per club attend the meeting.
 - It is okay to have a strong U9 group amongst U10s
 - Note: “U9” will not have the offsides rule; “U10” will.
- Agree on quantity of teams per league – 5-10 teams.
- A MAYSA representative will lead the meeting, help to build consensus, etc.
- Agree on play dates or any dates/locations for festival-type events.

The Process, continued



The Process, continued

Step 4 – begins with start of season

- Schedule is submitted to Referee Assignors, by MAYSA
- Teams play matches as scheduled.
- Coaches within the club work amongst each other if they need to borrow players or if a player should be moved up or down a level for the benefit of his or her development.
- Within the club, teams should consider training as a pool of players rather than as individual teams.

The Process, continued

Step 5 – Game Days

- Referees perform equipment checks and officiate the game. Referees will not check for coach pass nor review the roster.
- Regional Cooperative and Clubs are responsible for ensuring each coach has a pass and that the team for each match is appropriate for the day.
- Clubs and the Regional Cooperative oversee the matches and play dates to guide a healthy, supportive atmosphere for players, coaches, referees and each other.

....and then restart the process for Spring

Throughout the process, communicate to players and parents alike that they should not be surprised to participate on more than one team.

Celebrate and explain the benefits of having multiple coaches, a lot of friends/teammates, etc.

Key Requirements

1. Interclub cooperation – together, we can do more.
2. Cooperation amongst coaches at the intra and interclub level. Use the contact information on GotSoccer.
3. A proactive Club Lead/Liaison and meeting scheduling deadlines.
4. Timely, accurate submission of league alignment and scheduling into to MAYSA
5. General awareness of your teams/players abilities.

How this is a platform for optimization

1. Consolidated play dates & locations:
 - Coaching director can observe more players, teams, coaches and parents.
 - Club can communicate and interact with a lot of parents at once
 - Easier to attract referees to officiate multiple-games in a row and a Referee Mentor can be on site.
2. Clubs working together is only a good thing.
3. Easier for the Regional Cooperative to be more responsive to player and team needs than MAYSA

FAQs

Q: The offsides rule?

A: U9 will continue to play without the offsides rule. U10 will continue to play with the offsides rule. Coaches are encouraged to remind referees before the game of which age group they are officiating and whether or not they are using the offsides rule. Further, coaches will be patient and understanding of the officiating.

FAQs

Q: Score reporting and league standing?

A: Score reporting is beneficial for some quantitative review and analysis of the league formation but “winning” is not an emphasis. The review of scores, we believe, does have some benefit for preparation from match to match. There will not be league winners, 2nd place, 3rd place. Club Lead is highly encouraged to track score-reporting and follow-up with their coaches who do not report scores.

FAQs

Q: Will we have to play a team from our own club?

A: It depends on numerous factors and clubs should explain to players, parents and coaches that it is a possibility. But, by working together within your club and other clubs in the Cooperative you can minimize this or use it to your benefit.

FAQs

Q: Can our U9 and U10 teams play in tournaments?

A: Yes, it is up to you. Tournaments at this age group are, in truth, like festivals but may offer your teams more opportunities. If you collaborate on your schedules you can probably free up more weekends to participate in tournaments....or do family activities, go to a football game, etc.

FAQs

Q: Is MAYSA fixed on this new program?

A: Essentially, yes. But, it will evolve and improve with each season. And in many, many ways extends empowerment to clubs to manage the experience of their teams, players and families. It is much more in line with USSF Best Practices and, if the clubs take advantage of the opportunity, better for player development.

FAQs

Q: Can we set up scrimmages with other teams?

A: Absolutely! If you want to play a team for a second or third time, or want to play someone outside your Regional Cooperative, go ahead. You may also work with the Referee Assignor to acquire a match official and pay him or her.

What will Success Look Like?

- Less travel
- Clubs having strong working relationships that put “The Player” at the center of their decisions
- More time for players and their families to have a life outside of soccer
- Less stressful environments for players and referees
- More parity in the match-ups because the clubs & coaches are the most familiar with their players and teams
- More opportunities to benefit from WYSA resources

- Clubs begin to work with and amongst one another to arrange scrimmages
- Club-level pool trainings
- Fewer/no e-mails to MAYSA about long drive times and on-field mismatches

Here are the Regional Cooperatives

North Cooperative

- Portage
- Baraboo
- Lodi
- Reedsburg
- Sauk Prairie
- Wisconsin Heights
- Middleton
- Madison
- Beaver Dam
- Columbus
- Watertown
- Sun Prairie
- DeForest
- Waunakee

South West Cooperative

- Dodgeville
- Platteville
- Mt Horeb
- Verona
- Monroe
- New Glarus
- Belleville

South East Cooperative

- Glacial Drumlin
- Stoughton
- Oregon
- Edgerton
- McFarland
- Milton
- Janesville
- Evansville
- Monona Grove