



For Immediate Release

SOCAL and AZ Soccer Association (ASA) Outline 2026/27 Transition to NEWCOMP and Future Collaboration Efforts

Organizations align with team-based competition model while creating new opportunities to reduce travel and enhance player exposure through joint events and programming

April 10, 2026 (Southern California and Phoenix, AZ) SOCAL Soccer League (SOCAL) and the Arizona Soccer Association (ASA) are committed to working together to provide the best possible competitive environment and development pathway for players, teams, and clubs across our regions.

With the introduction of the NEWCOMP *team-based league*, sanctioned by US Club Soccer, ASA will sunset its current club-based National League structure following the conclusion of the 2026/27 season.

Beginning the 2026/27 season, ASA will serve as the NEWCOMP Operator for team-based competition in Arizona, while SOCAL will serve as the Operator of the NEWCOMP team-based competition in Southern California.

For the 2026/27 seasonal year:

- ASA will continue to host the club-based USYS National League for one final season for any clubs that wish to stay club-based for one more year. The club-based competition model will sunset after the 2026/27 season.
- SOCAL has communicated to its member clubs that those currently participating in the USYS National League may transition into the NEWCOMP team-based league operated by SOCAL for the 2026/27 season.
- 2026/27 will serve as a transitional year, aligned with the shift from birth-year to school-year age group formation.
- During this transition year, clubs from outside leagues will be permitted to join the SOCAL NEWCOMP league without a play-in event.
- Beginning the 2027/28 season, entry into the SOCAL NEWCOMP will require qualification through a play-in competition for any limited available spots.

Both organizations recognize that Southern California and Arizona are among the top talent regions in the country, and we are aligned in our goal to create meaningful opportunities for collaboration that

benefit players in both states while reducing the cost, or requirements, of travel and by focusing on providing the best possible atmosphere for localized competition with cross-play events that benefit the players based on age.

As part of this collaboration:

- SOCAL will host a College Showcase event in Southern California in early November 2026, where Arizona teams will be invited to participate. This event will focus on “*bringing college coaches to you,*” by providing a platform for high-level competition and exposure, with cross-play between California and Arizona teams.
- SOCAL and ASA are also exploring collaboration between the SOCAL Futures Program and the Arizona ODP Program, with plans to create state vs. state events that highlight emerging talent in younger age groups prior to NEWCOMP participation.

“The introduction of NEWCOMP represents an important step forward in the evolution of competition for our SOCAL teams,” said Michelle Chesters, Executive Director of the SOCAL Soccer League. “This transition year creates a unique opportunity for clubs to move into a team-based model while we work alongside ASA to collaborate on meaningful events, reduce travel demands for players and families, and create high-level competition closer to home. We are fully aligned with the direction of NEWCOMP and remain focused on delivering the best possible environment for player development and exposure.”

“Arizona Soccer Association is excited to partner with SOCAL as neighboring NEWCOMP Operators. This collaboration will be a positive outcome for all members and will create unique opportunities and experiences,” states Jonathan Berzins, CEO of ASA.

While the final structure of NEWCOMP playoffs is still being determined, both SOCAL and ASA are fully committed to ongoing collaboration. Together, we will continue to identify and develop opportunities that enhance competition, exposure, and development for the clubs, teams, and players we serve.