



## ***Michigan Rush Soccer***

### **Program Description**

#### **Purpose**

This guide describes the Michigan Rush structure, philosophy, and commitment to developing the total soccer player. Use this information within to help decide if Michigan Rush is the right fit for your player and your family.

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#### ***Michigan Rush Structure***

The Michigan Rush is an extension of The Northville Soccer Association (NSA), Downriver Youth Soccer and the Central Michigan Soccer Association, which are volunteer organizations. Michigan Rush is lead by the Northville Soccer Association (NSA) Board of Directors. To ensure development of quality soccer players, our professional coaching staff serves the Michigan Rush & NSA membership.

#### **Directors:**

Mark Zathey: Michigan Rush Technical Director & Director of Coaching U13-U18 Boys

John Carr: Michigan Rush Downriver Director of Coaching

Eric Rudland: Michigan Rush Central Director of Coaching & Academy Director U5-U12 Boys and Girls

Andy Vanover: Director of Coaching U9-U12 Boys and Girls

Tony Deacon: Director of Coaching U13-U18 Girls

Mary Kay Hussey: Jr. Academy Director U6-U8 Boys and Girls

Vince Porreca: Downriver Jr. Academy Director U5-U8 Boys and Girls

Paul Thomas: Recreational Director

The directors are committed to improving the technical skills of players and, later, their tactical insight. The directors ensure that high quality instruction is delivered to Michigan Rush Players by professional coaches. The professional coaches accept the responsibility to address the needs of our players and teams.

Michigan Rush players range in age from Under-5 (U5) through Under-18 (U18). The Michigan Rush Jr. Academy is our introduction to the "Rush Way." The U9-U12 teams play in the Western Suburban Soccer League (WSSL). The U13-U18 teams compete in the Michigan State Premier Soccer Program (MSPSP). Downriver Developmental teams play in the Great Lakes Soccer League (GLSL).

### ***Michigan Rush Vision Statement***

Rush Soccer is committed to providing an unparalleled soccer experience for all who have interest in the game of soccer. The Rush promotes the spirit of sportsmanship, the electricity of competition and the importance of pure enjoyment. The Rush accepts the responsibilities of teaching life lessons to our athletes to further their development inside the game and out. The Rush is committed to making soccer a pleasant, safe and rewarding experience for everyone involved, regardless of age or ability. We believe that all players are winners because everyone is afforded an equal opportunity to explore their potential and pursue positive outcomes on and off the field. Through quality coaching, sound leadership and absolute sincerity, The Rush will work to be the best club in the state, nation, and world.

### ***Michigan Rush Club Features***

- Premier teams for boys and girls U13 through U18
- Select teams for boys and girls U9 through U18
- Professional instruction from licensed coaches
- Team training sessions
- Technical/functional training sessions
- Director of Coaching (DOC) training – additional training for our older players
- Goalkeeper training
- Fitness training
- Tutor program – Players can train with other Rush teams, in addition to their own team training
- College Advisory Program for high school players interested in playing college soccer

### ***Club Environment Description***

The Michigan Rush coaching staff strives to provide an environment that maximizes development of the complete player. In this environment, we strive to:

- give gifted players the opportunity to develop at a pace appropriate for the individual player
- promote a sense that accomplishments and successes must be earned on merit and performance
- maximize development based on ability, interest, and commitment

**Supportive Environment** – Michigan Rush believes that players will develop best in an environment that is enjoyable, challenging, safe, positive, and spirited.

Parent Support: Parents should guide their players to embrace new challenges. Parents should support the Michigan Rush Club environment. Parents should encourage all players and praise good efforts and new learning. Supportive parents recognize that player development and learning are the priorities.

## **Parent Roles**

One parent takes on the role of **Team Manager**, coordinating team paperwork, registration, and fee collection, and communicating training and game schedule logistics. Another parent handles tournament responsibilities. Parental support and involvement in the club are essential. Parents must support their son/daughter's attendance at all team and club functions. The club requires parent communication, planning, and understanding so we can minimize conflicts. When parents or players have an unavoidable conflict, the club expects timely communication. Rush welcomes and encourages vocal support during games. We insist that there are no negative comments from spectators to any player or officials. Coaches and players require a designated team area during each game so that reserve players have minimal distractions during games. Parents may discuss their son/daughter's development with the coach at a mutually agreed upon time and setting. For age appropriate players, parents should encourage discussions about development to be between coaches and players.

## **Player Placement/Selection Process**

**Player movement between teams:** Some players who play within their age group need an additional challenge. The Michigan Rush environment allows players to train with different teams at the same age level and teams up to two years older. In addition, players may intermittently play games with teams one year older for the benefit of the individual player and that team. A decision to move a player from one team onto another team will be made carefully by Rush staff. Good decisions about player movement require that coaches be aware of all players in the pool and players at both the level older and the level younger than their coaching assignment.

**Club Pass** – Michigan Rush uses a tool called “club pass” to enable players to play with others at their skill level. The club pass card has been approved and endorsed by MSYSA and US Club Soccer. It allows players to play “up” from a B team to an A team, or play up to two age groups older than their age-appropriate team. The players can move up for one league game or all of the league games. The decision to use the club pass is made carefully by the player, parents, and coaching staff. There are risks associated with the club pass. One is burnout – players playing too much. Another risk is the use the club pass with a lack of integrity. For example, some A teams could put their best players on the B team in an effort to help the B team win more games. For tournaments, players must register with only one team, including State Cup.

**U9-U12:** There is a pool of players at each level, grouped according to ability into two or more teams. The teams are referred to as A, B, or C (or Nike, Swoosh or Classic). The teams have one coach per team and the teams in an age group may have the same coach, who may have one or more assistant coaches. All players in the pool may train together based on coach-to-player ratio, available space, and training objectives.

**U13-U18:** Michigan Rush recognizes that players develop at different rates over the course of a year. Player development is not an “assembly line” process. It is natural for players to experience peaks and valleys in their progress. Development factors include the frequency of contacts, the level of play, each player's personal goals, action plan of commitment, level of focus and concentration, and physical changes (e.g., growth spurts). Large motor skills and fine motor skills change for individual players. Michigan Rush is an environment in which the evolving individual needs of each player will be met.

**Player Selection:** The Michigan Rush offers an open tryout beginning every June 15th. The tryouts include two or more sessions, which last 1.5-2 hours each. During tryouts, Rush staff coaches observe and evaluate players in soccer related environments. Player selection results are communicated in a letter, hand delivered to the parent or guardian with the player at the completion of tryouts. Parents and selected players should be sensitive to the fact that some players present are not selected.

## Michigan Rush Staff

Currently, Michigan Rush employs more than thirty part-time professional coaches. The coaches are nationally licensed through USSF and/or NSCAA. Michigan Rush coaches and directors expect to develop players' technical and tactical skills so that players enjoy success at the high school level and have the opportunity to play college soccer while earning a degree in higher education. All Michigan Rush coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue formal continuing education, as well as informal, self-directed learning in an effort to better service the players.

**Player Development Benchmarks** – Coaches will focus on these player development benchmarks:

### U4-U8: Community Stages – The Academy

- Explore opportunities with body and ball.
- Learn to control the ball with feet.
- Understand role of teammates, coach, and referees.
- Learn rules of the game.
- Demonstrate tactical concepts 1v1, 2v1, and 2v2.

### U9-U11: Development Stage

- Establish a passion for the game.
- Gain competence with dribbling, passing, receiving, shooting, tackling.
- Encourage individual self-confidence.
- Introduce concept of collective responsibility.
- Demonstrate tactical concepts (2v2-5v5): Principles of attacking and defending, player roles in attacking and defending.

### U12-U14: Identification Stage

- Develop individual technical skill and their relevance in game situations.
- Further promote each player's self-confidence.
- Continue focus on team spirit and collective responsibility.
- Intensify work ethic and dedication.
- Demonstrate tactical concepts (5v5-8v8): Principles of attacking and defending in larger groups, various systems of play (1-4-4-2, 1-3-5-2, and 1-4-3-3), player roles and responsibilities specific to various systems of play, zonal defending.
- Employ various styles of attacking: possession build-up, flank attacking, direct-service attacking, and counter-attack.
- Provide environment that empowers players to solve problems and make decisions during soccer quandaries.

### U15-U18: Established Stage

- Modify technical ability.
- Functional training – Teach each player's role and expectation within each system of play, identify optimal system of play and style of play given the conditions of the field, temperature, field dimensions, roster size, strengths and weaknesses of opponents, as well as strengths and weaknesses of own team.
- Teach protecting a lead and overcoming a deficit.
- Incorporate team-building exercises to achieve a "singleness of purpose".
- Focus on fitness component.

- Give players responsibility to solve soccer quandaries in context of game-related situations.
- Teach functional communication among teammates.
- Teach goal setting.

### **Player and Family Commitment—Typical Year Summary**

**Tryouts**—beginning June 15<sup>th</sup> (see [www.michiganrush.com](http://www.michiganrush.com) for tryout times)

Each team has two or more tryout sessions that last 1.5–2 hours each. Players are evaluated in a realistic soccer environment, and selected by the coaching staff for the premier team and the select teams.

#### **Fall Season—Training Sessions**

Team Training begins in late July to early August. Each coach communicates the exact date first day of training to the parents and players at tryouts. Fall training shall begin no later than the week of Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>. Players are required to attend training twice per week during August, September, and October. Each training session lasts from 1 ¼–2 hrs., depending on the philosophy of the coach and the team that he/she is developing.

Club Training—The club strongly encourages all players to attend Friday night “club training” sessions, which are held almost every Friday night during the fall season. The emphasis at club training is on developing technical skills.

#### **Fall Season—Games**

U9–U12 teams play 8–10 games in the Western Suburban Soccer League (WSSL). Other communities in WSSL are the South Lyon, Canton, Plymouth, Livonia, Novi, West Bloomfield, Walled Lake, Hamburg, and Huron Valley.

U13–U18 teams play 8–12 games in the Michigan State Premier Soccer Program (MSPSP). Other communities in MSPSP are Canton, Livonia, Novi, Ann Arbor, Rochester, Troy, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids and Lansing.

#### **Fall Season—Tournaments**

Michigan Rush selects one or two fall tournaments to “tune up” for an upcoming season, to experiment with strategies of play, to build relationships among team members, and to experience a variety of competition. The tournaments are held over a weekend. The tournaments chosen for the younger teams are local to the Midwest (e.g., Maumee, OH, Troy, MI, Petoskey, MI, Rochester, MI, and Canton, MI). Occasionally, teams may travel outside the Midwest. U16–U18 players can expect a variety of high quality, college showcase tournament opportunities.

#### **Winter Season—U9–U14 Boys and Girls/U15–U18 Boys**

1st Session: Regeneration Time—November 1–January 1

Michigan Rush advises all teams to choose times to rest during the holiday season. Some teams elect to play the first session of indoor and/or train once per week. Some players choose to sit out even if their team is playing. If a player plays first session, the time commitment is 1–2 hours per week. The objective for the down time is to allow players to regenerate. Young players can “burn out” from organized athletics without a specified time of minimal commitment during the soccer year. Michigan Rush hosts Joga Bonita during the 1st session. Joga Bonita is a philosophy of “street soccer.” Joga Bonita recognizes that players need time with their peers playing soccer in a player-centered environment. Players are empowered to take control of their own environment and play small-sided soccer. Coaches assume a reduced role of instruction and leadership and maintain a safe environment for the players.

## 2nd Session & 3rd Session—January through April

The game schedules for 2nd and 3rd sessions of indoor are generally 1 hour per week. The training schedule is a minimum of 1 hour per week. Many teams add a weekly drop-in training session and a weekly club training session. Some teams choose to add other team training or participate in more than one league to accelerate player development. Depending on expenses, climate, and the goals of each team for the spring, some teams participate indoors for the 3<sup>rd</sup> session. Other teams choose to begin outdoor training at the end of March and not participate in 3<sup>rd</sup> session of indoor soccer.

## Winter Season—U15-U18 girls

### 1st Session & 2nd Session—November-February

The game schedules for 1st and 2nd sessions of indoor are similar. The training requirements will include 1 training session per week. Most teams add a weekly drop-in training session or a weekly club training session. Some teams choose to add other team training or more than one league to accelerate player development. The older girls will stop training at the beginning of March, due to high school tryouts.

### Spring Season—Training sessions, games, and tournaments

The Spring season is very similar to the fall season in relation to games, training sessions, club training, and tournament commitments. The spring season training begins in late March or early April, weather permitting. The spring season ends in June before tryouts.

This outline is accurate for most Michigan Rush Teams. Exceptions are not limited to, but include our highest level Nike teams in the older age groups who may be preparing for college showcase tournaments periodically during the year. Our coaching staff does reserve the right to change the calendar in an effort to maximize player development.

## Financial Commitment

The fees for Michigan Rush range are spread out over the course of the year. Cost breakdowns can be obtained from Rush administration. The fees cover:

- Coach compensation
- Registration and insurance
- Outdoor and indoor training fee
- Outdoor and indoor facility rental
- Skill development clinics
- Uniforms
- Additional costs are incurred for hotel stays.

## What if I want to talk to someone about Michigan Rush?

For further information on Michigan Rush and its benefits to players, please contact Michigan Rush Technical Director, Mark Zathey at (734) 834-6332 or via email at [mzathey@gmail.com](mailto:mzathey@gmail.com).

For more information, visit the Michigan Rush website at [www.michiganrush.com](http://www.michiganrush.com).