# 2023 Spring/Summer THRUWAY LEAGUE - Team Admittance and Placement

## Team Admittance

### Objective:

The objective of the Thruway League is to provide a safe and competitive league environment for teams from New York State West Youth Soccer Association footprint who have demonstrated capability of play at a National, Regional, or State level. Although league membership will be a criterion for admittance, the league should be open to any team in NYSW who has demonstrated capability of play at this level.

### Process:

- Teams shall request admittance for play in the Thruway League as part of the annual application process posted to the League Website. The application process shall be opened to the dates that will be announced on the League Website. Dates will subject to change on a year-to-year basis. The application is considered complete upon receipt of the application fee.
- Applications shall be filled out in their entirety and should contain all necessary information to satisfy the criteria. Supporting information should be attached to the team application or separately emailed to the League Administrator.
- Applications shall be screened by the League Administrator, evaluated by the League Competition Committee, and approved by the League Board of Directors.
- All Teams Participating in the Thruway League will not be allowed to play in their local district league as well as any other state level league(s) that operate during the same time frame as the Thruway League. Participation in USYS National League and their conferences are exempt. Teams found to be participating in such leagues will be suspended from league play. All games played up to that point (if any) will be declared forfeits with such fines and penalties assessed.
- Appeals to initial admittance decisions shall be received in writing by the League Administrator no later than 48 hours following the publication of preliminary placements (date will be determined based on the specific calendar year of that year of competition). Appeals may not be made verbally or to any other person than the league administrator and may only reference information provided in the original application, unless clarification or additional detail is requested by the league. All Appeals will be subjected to a $150 fee which must be submitted at the time of appeal. Appeals will be evaluated by the League Competition Committee and changes to the original decision approved by the League Board.
- All decisions of the league are considered final.

### Criteria:

Teams will be admitted for play in the Thruway League based on the following criteria.

***For the U9-U11 age group – only League member teams will be considered for acceptance, unless teams are needed to fill divisions or have exceptional credentials***

- Teams from clubs which are members of the Thruway League shall be considered on their "club credentials" and will be automatically admitted for play at their age group.

Teams ***will be considered*** for admission to the Thruway League based on the following criteria.

- Teams which played in the previous Thruway League season and placed higher than the bottom two positions in the Presidential (2nd) division, subject to roster continuity. Teams who are "new" to the league but can demonstrate roster continuity to a previous team may assume the qualifications of the previous team SO LONG AS the previous team does not apply for league play (see application).

- Teams which are Champions of the uppermost division of their respective District Soccer League

- Teams who can demonstrate by team resume the ability to play above District Level Play. Team resumes should show exceptional play at state level tournaments, competitive play at regional and national level tournaments, and are roster continuity.

Roster Continuity shall be demonstrated by showing that 50% plus one (minimum of 9 players) roster consistency with the previous year team.

### Application:

***What happens to teams who finish in the bottom two places in the Thruway League Presidential Division?***

They would be permitted to apply as a "new" team for the subsequent year although it would be suggested that they consider competition in a district league rather than the Thruway League.

***A "new" team from Club "B" has substantially the same roster as a team that played last year from Club "A", are they automatically admitted to the League?***

Subject to Roster Continuity, the "new" team could be considered to be the "old" team so long as Club "A" does not enter a team in the same age group. This stipulation is purposely a detriment against teams "jumping clubs".

## Team Placement

### Objective:

Once teams have been admitted to the Thruway League, the object of team placement is to create the best competitive environment at either one or two levels. That is, to place the best half of teams in an age bracket in the National Division and the next half of teams in the Presidential Division.

### Process:

Following completion of the league competitive season, the competition committee will complete the "automatic placement" of teams for the subsequent season as follows;

- The lowest standing team in the National (1st) division shall be relegated to the Presidential (2nd) division
- The highest standing team in the Presidential (2nd) division shall be promoted to the National (1st) division.
- At the recommendation of the Competition Committee, relegation and promotion (above) may be expanded to include the lower two and upper two teams of each respective division. This expansion shall be done equally (i.e. one/one, two/two) and is intended to be used when the finishes for these positions is close.
- The two lowest standing teams in the Presidential division shall be demoted from the league (but permitted re-entry per admittance policy).

As part of the league application process (see above) teams shall claim their automatic placement by successfully applying for play for the subsequent (now current) year, subject to roster continuity.

Following close of the application process, the competition committee shall meet to determine the preliminary placement of teams for the competitive season according to the following process;

- Teams who have claimed their automatic placement, shall start with that placement. Automatic placements which have not been claimed shall be considered abandoned.

- All teams which do not have an automatic placement (that is all new teams), shall be initially placed into the Presidential (2nd) division.
- Each age group will be evaluated for the number of teams in each division as follows;
    - Proposed divisions should have a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of nine (9) teams. This will allow either home/home, single round robin, or some hybrid of the two schedules in an eight game season. Age brackets with nine or less teams will play one division. Age brackets with more than 18 qualifying applicants shall be reduced to 18 teams in accordance with the criteria below however no team from a "member" club can be eliminated.
    - Divisions shall be of equal number of teams (+/- one if an odd number of teams at the discretion of the competition committee). Division structures with more than one team imbalance (i.e. a7/5 split) shall require approval of the board of directors.
- Once the number of teams in each division has been established, teams shall be moved from their initial placement position to fill the divisions according to the criteria below to achieve the placement objective (above).
- All placement decisions of the league board are considered final.

## Criteria:

The process is designed such that, in most cases, criteria will be applied to promote teams from initial placement in Presidential Division to National division. It is possible however that relegation from National to Presidential Division may be required.

Teams meeting one or more of the following criteria will be placed in the National Division;

- Top four placements from previous year National Division, subject to roster continuity.
- State Cup Champion and Finalist from previous season, subject to roster continuity.

Teams will be considered for placement in the National Division considering the following criteria;

- "Automatic placement" in National Division based on prior year results
- Competitive finish in previous year State Cup (generally defined as qualification for final four with result of goal differential better than minus 5).
- Team resumes should show direct competition against National Division Teams, exceptional play at regional and national level tournaments. Teams who are "new" to the league but can demonstrate roster continuity to a previous team may assume the qualifications of the previous team SO LONG AS the previous team does not apply for league play (see application).
- Team Roster Strength
    - Positive Indicators: Players with prior play experience in USYS National League, Thruway League and ODP Players (not merely ODP pool players) rostered to State, Regional, National teams.
    - Negative Indicators: Underage players on Roster
- Teams which have been relegated in the automatic placement process should not be considered for re-promotion until one other team has been promoted (beyond promotion from automatic placement).
- Consideration may be given to geographic location of teams in the placement process to make travel and scheduling more efficient.

## Application:

***Can a team which has been "relegated" from National to Presidential Division return to National Division for the subsequent year?*** They would not begin the process there by virtue of the "automatic placement" however it is possible that after non-returning and new teams are considered, this team is in the "upper half". It might be suggested that a relegated team not be "re-promoted" unless one other team (beyond the automatic promotion) is promoted ahead of them.

***Can a team refuse promotion, or request play in only the Presidential Division?*** The league runs its promotion and relegation system to enhance the level of play. The point of the system is to play at a level to achieve promotion or play at a level to not be relegated. However, if a team makes a strong case for a reason not to be promoted, the league will listen to the case. That stated, all decisions of the league are final.

***Can a "new team" play in the National Division?*** Only if they have credentials which show them to be in the upper half of teams in the age bracket. By process, they would initially be placed in the Presidential Division, but if their credentials supported upper division placement, then it would be possible.

***What happens to a team that drops out of the league for one season then returns?*** They would be treated as a "new team" however they would arguably have a team resume and credentials which would be considered in the placement process.

## Competition Committee

The Competition Committee shall be established by the Thruway League Board of Directors as follows;

- The Thruway League Administrator who shall serve in a non-voting capacity
- No less than three, but no more than six members of the Thruway League Board of Directors selection of whom shall strive to achieve geographic and club diversity.