

AMATEUR CUP 2027 CONCEPT

Overview

AMATEUR CUP 2027 is a groundbreaking partnership between US Soccer, USASA, and the Adult Council to grow and expand the 100-year-old Amateur Cup into an inclusive national Championship for US Soccer. AMATEUR CUP 2027 will be funded by US Soccer, Elite Adult Amateur Clubs, The Elite Soccer Fund and Commercial Partners. USASA will be relieved of all financial or other resources commitments for this event.¹

AMATEUR CUP 2027 will have a seven-member Management Team, Chaired by Fritz Marth, and include representatives from US Soccer, USASA, Elite Amateur Soccer Clubs, and representatives of national and regional leagues. The Management Team will develop and approve both policies and competition regulations. In addition, the Management Team will appoint a commissioner and staff to oversee competition matches.

AMATEUR CUP 2027 will encompass two levels of competition, Qualifying Stage and Final Stage. The Qualifying Stage is projected to include 150 to 200 registered teams that will play matches in 2026 to qualify for the Final Stage. There will be 16 pathways to qualify for the Final Stage. The Final Stage will include 16 teams that will play 15 matches (round of 16, quarterfinals, semifinals, and a final) hosted by selected individual teams. Final Stage matches will be played in May through July 2027.

Qualifying Stage

The Qualifying Stage will be regionally scheduled and funded by the 16 Pathways. The 16 Pathways will be locally managed by a US Soccer Member (e.g. State Association or League) or an approved host committee. 16 Pathways will be locally developed with an emphasis on minimal local transportation expenses. The core policy is that any team registered with US Soccer and playing in a four-team league has the opportunity to participate.

Pathways will be nominated, selected, and approved by March 31, 2026. Pathways will include no more than two automatic byes currently envisioned to be the defending Amateur Cup Champion, and current Motta Trophy holder. The remaining 14 pathways will be a regional competition or league competition that has been approved by the Management Team.

¹ This is not in any way intended to prohibit or discourage any voluntary State Association officer, staff or other volunteer involvement in the qualifying stage.

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Proposed Pathways can be nominated by any US Soccer member, or group of members, for approval by the Management Team. Proposed pathways should include a minimum of eight teams and have a competition that minimizes team travel expenses. Pathways will be funded by the designated host committee or teams entered into the Qualifying Stage.

An excellent example of an Open Qualifying Pathway is the Washington State Association Championship that permits USL, USASA, NPSL, and local teams to enter. As an example, the 16 Pathways may, but not necessarily, be structured as follows:

National Champions

1. Motta Trophy winner
2. Prior Year Amateur Cup Winner

National League/Organization Qualifiers (competition determined by league/organization; Minimum 8 teams each, all entrants paying the entry fee and participating in a qualifying competition).²

3. NPSL
4. The League for Clubs
5. UPSL
6. USSSA
7. USL
8. APSL

Geographic Pathways (Primarily, but not limited to, USASA State Association Teams; minimum 8 teams each, all entrants paying the entry fee, and participating in a qualifying competition)

9. Pacific Northwest (WA, OR)
10. New England/New York
11. Mid-Atlantic (PA, NJ, MD, VA, WV)
12. Florida
13. Texas (with north and south subregional playdown)
14. The Carolinas and Georgia
15. California (with north and south subregional playdown)
16. Colorado - Utah

² A team otherwise eligible to participate in a National League/Organization Qualifier may instead choose to participate in a Geographic Pathway qualifier. However, no team may participate in two qualifiers.

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All Qualifying Pathways must determine a qualifying team by January 31, 2027.

The 16 qualifying teams that will be entered into the Final Stage will be announced no later than the 2027 US Soccer AGM.

Final Stage

The Final Stage will be managed by the Management Team and Commissioner. The projected budget is \$150,000. It is expected that several of the 15 matches will be regional and others will require air transportation. All team travel expenses, including hotels if required, will be paid by AMATER CUP 2027. The interested host teams will submit a proposal to host and be financially responsible for venue expenses. Referees will be assigned by a USSF-certified assignor appointed by the Management Team/Commissioner. AMATER CUP 2027 will emphasize the importance of fan development, broadcast streaming, and media exposure for every match.

Timeline

- Approval by USASA NBOD January 2026
- Approval by USASA Membership February 2026
- Appointment of Management Team February 2026
- Development of 16 Pathways March 2026
- Competitions 16 Pathways April – December 2026
- Final 16 Selection December 2026
- Final Stage Competition April 2027 – July 2027