



OHIO SOUTH YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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Ohio North, Ohio South Membership Approve Historical Merger

New Ohio Soccer Association launches January 1, 2021

CINCINNATI, OH (December 3, 2020) – For the first time in history, two State Associations will merge as one.

Ohio Youth Soccer Association North (Ohio North) and Ohio South Youth Soccer Association (Ohio South) are excited to announce that earlier in the week, both respective memberships voted to approve the merger proposal and come together as Ohio Soccer Association (OSA). The membership vote took place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for each State Association.

The newly formed Ohio Soccer Association will focus on joining the soccer landscape in Ohio, encapsulating the idea of bringing together organizations and communities across multiple affiliations into a state united. OSA seeks to give a greater voice to its membership, which includes both clubs and leagues. OSA desires to demonstrate greater flexibility with its membership to allow them to accomplish their own organizational goals and enhance player development. Additionally, OSA plans to place more attention on the grassroots/recreational soccer sector and connect communities through the sport to provide growth opportunities together.

“I am truly thrilled for the sport of soccer in Ohio”, said Gordon Henderson, Ohio South Executive Director. “This merger will enable us to create a ‘Big Tent’ that we think the whole soccer community - large and small, city wide and rural - will desire to be a part of. The future is very bright and we will move forward as an organization that listens to our members and solves issues at the local level in order to help our league and club members grow. This truly will be an organization that will create a state united for all.”

Ohio North President Paul Emhoff agrees, stating “Right now all eyes are on us within the US Youth Soccer and U.S. Soccer landscapes. This merger is a unique opportunity to build a model state association. The merger will give members a solid foundation to build on moving forward. The important piece in making OSA one of the best in the nation is its membership. This is their opportunity to help build OSA by getting involved while we reinvest back into them. I would like to thank Jen Fickett, Tom Turner, Gordon Henderson, Bill Glaze and John Ruffolo, as well as the Ohio North and Ohio South Board of Directors for their selfless vision and support during this process.”

Ohio South Board President John Ruffolo added, “I am personally pleased and excited that the merger between Ohio South and Ohio North was formally approved by both organizations this week. This merger was pursued to improve the landscape of youth soccer in Ohio. The goals



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of this merger were to create one strong association that could integrate programs and resources to provide an improved environment for player development, technical instruction, improved competition, and centralized management.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Ohio South, I want to say “thank you” to all those who were instrumental in allowing Ohio South and Ohio North to merge and form “Ohio Soccer Association”. I specifically want to thank our Ohio South Board members who devoted numerous volunteer hours to craft a solution which would not only be acceptable to our current league members, but also, our clubs and teams. I further want to thank our associates at Ohio North, specifically their President, Paul Emhoff, for their professionalism in the negotiations of this merger. Finally, I want to thank our Executive Director, Gordon Henderson, and our Assistant Executive Director / Director of Coaching, Bill Glaze for their efforts in steering Ohio South to the finish line. All were vital to getting us to accomplish our goals.”

Considering this historical moment, US Youth Soccer CEO Skip Gilbert adds, “USYS is about bringing communities together through the power of soccer. Sometimes, the best and most efficient way to support our players is to bring two great State Associations together. This is what Ohio North and South did and their efforts will surely impact the growth of the game statewide and the overall success of the USYS Family in Ohio. We thank all of the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to make this merger happen.”

The new Ohio Soccer Association will officially launch on January 1, 2021, pending filing with the state of Ohio. Ohio North and Ohio South programming will continue as normal through the Spring 2021 season. The first official season under Ohio Soccer Association will be Fall 2021.



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