



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Youth Soccer Region I selects Maryland for 2013, 2014 National Championships

Events expected to generate \$25 million for State's economy

BALTIMORE (March 3) – Maryland will host the U.S. Youth Soccer Region I National Championships in 2013 and 2014, according to a joint statement by Terry Hasseltine, director of the Maryland Office of Sports Marketing, and Marie Langford, executive director of the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association.

The two, week-long events are expected to deliver a combined economic boost of about \$25 million for the state, Hasseltine said. Between 3,500 and 4,000 players would participate each year. Each tournament would also likely generate 15,000 room nights for Maryland's lodging industry.

"Maryland's selection to host Youth Soccer Regional Championships in 2013 and 2014 reinforces our profile as a premier destination for high-profile sporting events," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "Organizers can count on having all the support and resources necessary for staging a first-class event. In return, Maryland will receive an economic stimulus that will benefit many of our small businesses, particularly in the hospitality industry."

Hasseltine, who has also been involved with the selection of two Maryland venues as possible World Cup sites, said: "What makes youth soccer so attractive is that it's obviously not just the players and coaches who will come to Maryland – it's their families and friends, too. We certainly have all the attractions and recreational opportunities here that can make their visits memorable."

According to details of the youth-soccer bid, Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen could be the site for opening ceremonies. Tournament matches will be played at two Harford County venues – Cedar Lane Regional Park and Carsins Run Fields. The Sheraton North Baltimore (Towson) would be the headquarters hotel.

The U.S. Youth Soccer Region I Championships consist of boys and girls teams – in both the under-12 and under-19 age groups – representing the 15 state associations affiliated with the national organization. The 15 are: Connecticut, Delaware, Eastern New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York West, Pennsylvania West, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Maryland State Youth Soccer Association includes more than 140 affiliate member clubs and 58,000 registered players, ages 6 to 19, along with 5,000 volunteers and 2,000 coaches.

"Our selection as the host location for the regional championships provides our state program with tremendous exposure," Langford said.

Maryland's Office of Sports Marketing is a partnership between the Department of Business and Economic Development and the Maryland Stadium Authority. It was created to promote national and international sports competitions in Maryland – both amateur and professional – in order to enhance the quality of life for Maryland residents and strengthen the state's presence in the sporting-events marketplace.

Hasseltine and Langford presented Maryland's bid for the games at a Feb. 26 meeting of the U.S. Youth Soccer Association in Dallas.

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