

Maryland wins major youth soccer tourney in 2013 and 2014

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A Harford County sports park has been awarded a major youth soccer tournament expected to bring a \$24 million economic impact to the region over a two-year span.

Cedar Lane Regional Park in Bel Air will host the U.S. Youth Soccer Region I championships in 2013 and 2014. The seven-day tournament will run from late June through the Fourth of July holiday.

Between 3,500 and 4,000 players, aged 12 to 19, will participate each year. Between families and athletes, nearly 15,000 room nights are expected to be occupied each year for the event. Youth tournaments tend to bring out more family members and friends who want to see their youngster in action.

U.S. Youth Soccer's Region I spans 15 states from Maine to Virginia and is the largest region in youth soccer. The events are expected to pump \$12 million into the region each summer, said Terry Hasseltine, Director of the state's Sports Marketing Office. The state did not offer any financial incentives to lure the tournament, he said.

"This is the kind of event that we want in Maryland because it keeps the energy and enthusiasm of [soccer] at a good high," said Hasseltine, noting the sold out international soccer exhibition at M&T Bank Stadium last summer.

Hasseltine, along with Marie Langford, executive director of the [Maryland State Youth Soccer Association](#), traveled to Fort Worth, Texas, Friday to make their final pitch. The duo found out following the presentation they were awarded the tournament. Maryland was competing with Hershey, Pa., which was awarded the tournament in 2011 and 2012.

Hasseltine said hosting the event in 2013 and 2014 should be a benefit because the economy is expected to improve.