

Md. courts lucrative youth soccer championship

Posted: 6:49 pm Wed, January 20, 2010

By [Liz Farmer](#)

Daily Record Business Writer

Maryland Sports Marketing Director Terry Hasseltine says the U.S. Youth Soccer Championship is 'one of those events that will elevate Maryland as a destination for large-scale sporting events.'

Maryland is bidding to host a youth soccer championship in 2011 and 2012 that could bring more than \$12 million in revenue to the state each year.

State officials have their eye on the U.S. Youth Soccer Championship, a national summer tournament played across five regions in the United States between 185,000 players on 10,000 teams from youth soccer state associations. Champions in the six age brackets (under-14 through under-19) from each regional event then meet to compete for a national title in July.

Officials are pitching Maryland as the host state for Region 1, or East Region, which covers Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia. The event brings in more 4,500 players and their families to the host area for the six-day tournament.

West Virginia, last year's Region 1 host, raked in an estimated \$12.5 million from visitors who booked approximately 11,000 room nights at area hotels. The state will host this year's tournament too.

"This is one of those events that will elevate Maryland as a destination for large-scale sporting events," Terry Hasseltine, the state's Director of Sports Marketing, said.

Hasseltine said Maryland is offering up Cedar Lane Regional Park in Harford County and Carsins Run Turf Farm in Bel Air as the game sites it will include in its bid. Representatives from U.S. Youth Soccer are scheduled to visit both sites Thursday, Hasseltine said.

The bid is due in February and the winning hosts are expected to be announced at this year's tournament, which starts in June.

Maryland has made some big gains in the soccer world over the last year. In July, M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore hosted an international exhibition game between England's Chelsea Football Club and Italy's AC Milan. The match sold out more than a week in advance and brought in an estimated \$12 million to \$14 million in economic impact for the state.

Last week, Baltimore made the cut to be included in the U.S. bid for the 2018 or 2022 World Cup. FedEx Field, affiliated with Washington, D.C. but located in Landover, also made the cut.

This week, the National Soccer Coaches Association announced their decision to bring their 2016 and 2018 conventions to Baltimore. The convention is already scheduled to come here next year.

