NATIONAL 1 LEAGUE

Brand Guidelines

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Who We Are

The National 1 League is the **top team-based competition in US Club Soccer and US Youth Soccer**, elevating teams across the country into a unified national competition platform **that culminates in the ECNL Conference League Playoffs and Finals in the postseason**. Beginning with its inaugural season in 2026-27, the National 1 League brings together two established league platforms - US Club Soccer's National Premier Leagues and US Youth Soccer's National League - in an extraordinary display of collaboration. Participants and their families benefit from a carefully constructed system of conferences and districts that provide clarity, reduce travel and costs, and increase access to talent identification and college scouting opportunities. The National 1 League offers a pathway into the ECNL Regional League for top-performing clubs and a pathway into National 1 for teams excelling within their local competitions and state associations.

There is huge branding potential among the entire digital ecosystem: the league itself, the supporting national organizations, the league operators, the accepted clubs and teams, and the participants themselves. Please follow these guidelines when representing the N1 brand, and refer to the marketing tips and best practices in the second half of this document as a resource.

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Behind The Logo

The official name is **National 1 League**, and **National 1** is acceptable on second reference. **N1** is the abbreviated term, used in schedules and standings. Refrain from using National One League, National One, NOL, and N1L.

The **National 1 League** name signifies two leagues - the National Premier Leagues and the National League - coming together for the good of the game. The result is a more unified youth soccer ecosystem, benefitting players and families across the country.

Logo meaning

The 1 towers above, asserting that the collective is stronger together than divided. The logo is modern, bold and uncomplicated - a reflection of the league platform. In a world of convolution, the strength of the National 1 League is its assertive, straightforward nature.

The shape of the shield follows the shape of the U.S. Soccer shield, representing the backing and support of the U.S. Soccer Federation.

Shield and logotype

The shield is the primary logo, and should be used whenever possible. Use the shield on jerseys, and when creating a lockup up with partner logos that are in the form of a shield.

The logotype should be used as a watermark, or in other graphics where the logo will appear at a small scale.

Logo variations

There are light (gold) and dark (navy) versions of the logotype, and only one version of the full-color shield. The shield and logotype also have black and white versions, these should be used sparingly and only when it is not possible to use a full-color version of the logo.

Shield

Logotype

Black and white variations

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Logo Usage

Our logo is the most effective way to communicate our identity through an image. It communicates our values and sets us apart from our competitors. The National 1 League logo is protected by trademark.

Adhering to logo usage guidelines is incredibly important for recognizability and for general aesthetics. If the logo is misused it damages the credibility of our brand.

Logo don'ts

No shadowing, tilting, overlays, and ensure visibility against backgrounds. The N1 logo can only appear in black, white, or approved brand colors. Use your best judgment to ensure logo visibility against backgrounds.

Unacceptable logo usage

Ensure contrast and visibility against backgrounds.

Do not change the color of the logo, or any of its parts.

Do not change or resize any parts of the logo.

Do not tilt the logo.

Colors

The logotype can appear in either gold or navy. The full color shield is always navy with a gold outline and logotype. If necessary, there is are black and white versions of both logos. More details about colors on the next page of this document.

Clear space

Use this guideline to ensure that there is ample space between the logo and any other design elements in a composition. Apart from a lock-up, the logo is a standalone element that should not be crowded by any other elements. Clear space enhances visibility. Use the width of the '1' in the logo as a guideline for clearspace around the logo, and when creating partner lockups. (See examples shown right.)

Logo size

Always consult with US Club Soccer Communications Department when using the N1 logo in conjunction with your own. As a general rule, the N1 logo should not be placed within another logo, as it would almost always appear too small to be recognizable.

Co-branding

The N1 logo can appear with other logos in a lock-up to signify a partnership. Follow clear space guidelines when creating a lock-up. Use the shield when the lockup is with another shield or 1:1 logo. Use the logotype when the lockup is with another logotype. (See examples below.)

The grey box outlines the minimum clear space that should always be present around the logo. This can be calculated using the width of the '1' in the logo.

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Color Palette

Our colors speak to our brand. Using consistent colors strengthens our brand awareness.

Primary colors

The Players First gold comes from the NPL brand. It represents what all athletes strive for, and the gold standard of the platform.

Navy comes from the National League. It is a color that is authoritative, established, and aspirational. It also speaks to the national nature of the platform, as it is a patriotic color in our country.

Accent colors

Sky blue can be used as an accent color to add depth and dimension to graphics, but should never appear in the logo.

Color proportions

The navy and gold colors both share equal weight in the shield. When using the logotype, choose the color that will allow it to stand out from the background. Generally, the navy logotype should be used for light backgrounds and the gold logotype should be used for dark backgrounds. Do not reverse the colors in the shield, or apply the sky blue to any part of the logo.

In graphics, use gold or navy as the dominating colors, and use sky blue as an accent. Use the primary colors for 85% of the design, and sky blue in 15% of the design as an accent (Example right).

Pantone colors

Always get design approval before printing the N1 logo. To ensure proper color matches when printing, use Pantone 4142 for National Navy and Pantone 466 for Players First Gold.

Primary colors

Players First Gold
#d4b380

National Navy
#2c365a

Accent color

Sky Blue
#a3ceee

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Typography

What typography we use plays a large part in our brand identity. We use bold, sans serif typefaces. Use bolder fonts for larger headlines, and regular or lighter fonts for body copy and smaller text. National One League uses Druk Medium and Druk Super. Do not use Druk for body copy, as it can be difficult to read in large amounts.

Druk Wide Medium
Druk Wide Medium is the primary typeface for the N1 brand.

Druk Wide Super
Druk Wide Super is a secondary type option for bold headlines in graphics and other collateral material for the N1 brand.

Ag

Druk Wide Medium

Ag

Druk Wide Super

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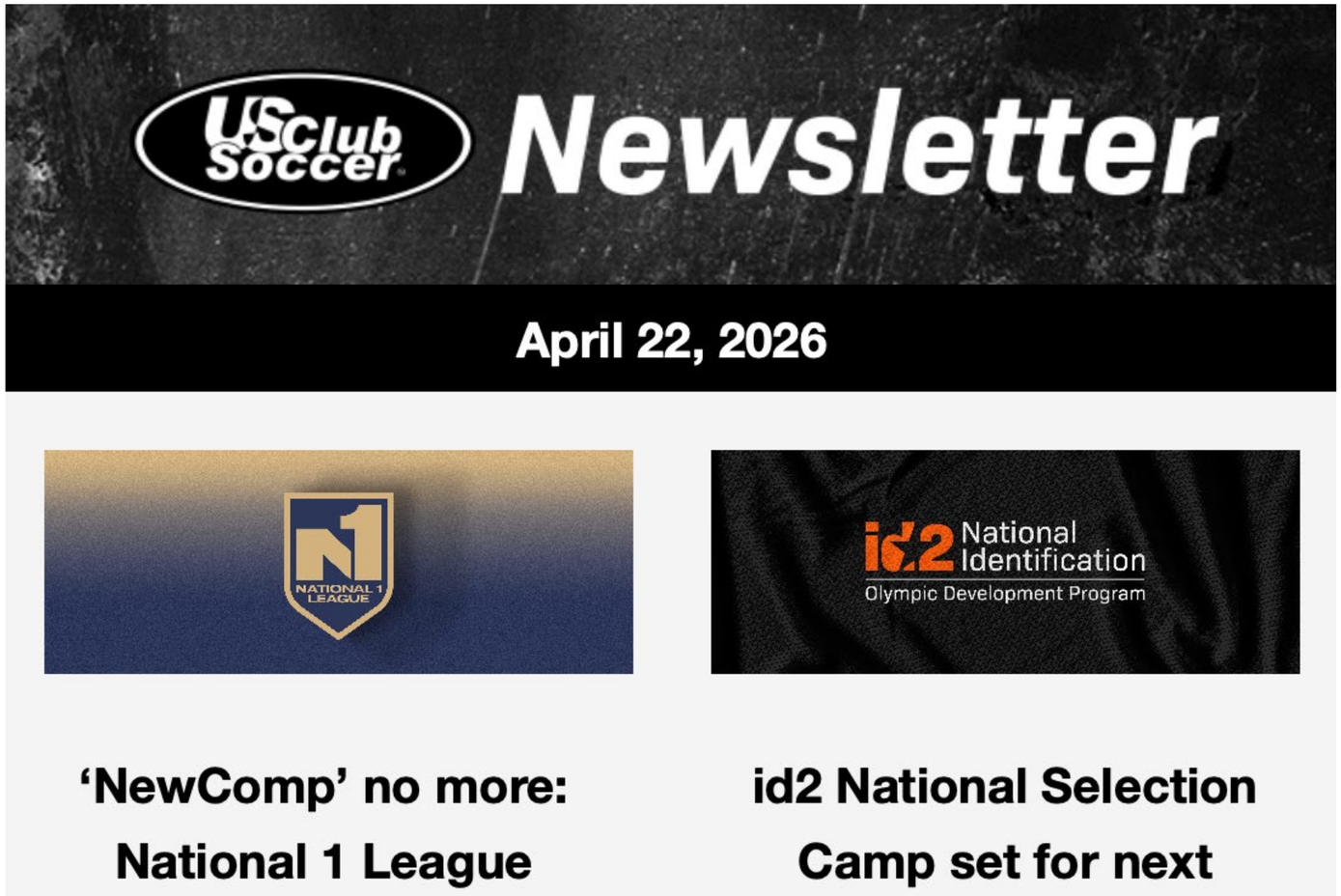
Marketing Tips: Email

The national approach
US Club Soccer, US Youth Soccer and the ECNL are including National 1 League news and updates in their newsletters. And, as press releases and other standalone emails are developed, they'll email them out to their respective databases. The N1 Commissioner also sends targeted, operational-in-nature email updates throughout the season.

What league operators can do
Operators are encouraged to share N1-related news and updates in their newsletters, as well. During the season, there may be opportunities for you to segment your contacts to send specific N1 communications. This could lead to "N1 Roundups," for example, that feature games of the week, exceptional players and coaches, standings check-ins, postseason information, etc. Storytelling is often reserved for social media, but it doesn't have to be.

What clubs/teams can do
Clubs should feature their specific teams competing in the National 1 League and provide regular updates about performances and postseason opportunities. Especially since the 2026-27 season is its inaugural year, clubs are encouraged to link/refer to the National 1 League website to ensure accuracy of information.



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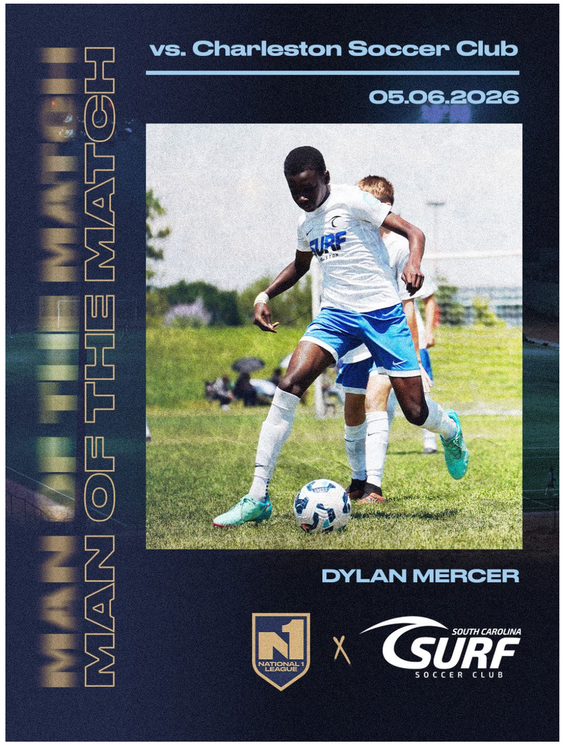
Marketing Tips: Social Media

The national approach

We are @national1league on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and X, and Instagram is our primary channel. In the lead up to August, we'll post content that informs and inspires, and we'll amplify appropriate league operator and participant content. During the season, we'll promote each district and those participants with a variety of content and campaigns, such as "Top Play" submissions, photos and videos, and standings check-ins. With it being the first year of the competition, we'll dedicate plenty of posts that explain the vision, structure and answer FAQs.



What league operators can do

Alignment with the brand guidelines is crucial, as operators are the first step removed from the national office and closer to the participant level. Please reference these brand guidelines and help the national office in identifying and correcting any errant branding. For example, if a club posts with "N1L" or "NL1" branding, send them a DM asking them to correct the branding. Catching and correcting this early will go a long way. League operators are encouraged to monitor what other operators are promoting and join in to amplify relevant messaging. For example, multiple operators within the same conference may agree to scale the green whistle initiative, promoting safety and support for officials under 18 years old. Your marketing potential increases exponentially this way. Don't forget about your complimentary Greenfly access. This is where the national office shares graphics, videos and templates before and during the season. You can email communications@usclubsoccer.org for assistance. Finally, tap into the content being published from @national1league. Repost, comment, share and add a note in your bio, like "proud member of @national1league" or something similar.

What clubs/teams can do

The key is consistency without stifling individuality. Teams can, and should, post about N1: their participating players, success stories of being exposed to new (yet closer in distance) opponents, upcoming games, postseason chances, etc. When your content includes effective storytelling, you engage more than just your audience today; you reach more non-followers. Even if you don't have a dedicated marketing or social media manager, you can still find ready-made graphics and easy-to-update templates created by the national office. Make sure you have access to those, which the national office distributes to all league operators. You may also reach out to communications@usclubsoccer.org.

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Marketing Tips: App

The national approach

US Club Soccer is building a new National 1 League mobile app. This app will be the best place to browse schedules and standings and create an online community for participants on game days. Teams can upload starting XI graphics, stream games, access mobile passcards and more. All of this is provided by the national office free to users. The app is expected to launch in August, and more information will be released in the coming weeks and months. It's worth saying: we're excited by the potential of this platform, and we think it will be the most powerful communication tool of all N1 digital channels.

What league operators can do

Leading up to the launch of the app, US Club Soccer will onboard all league operators and discuss ways they can amplify the platform and access benefits exclusive to them. Regular promotion of the app – specifically, encouraging families to download and use it – is recommended. There will be opportunities to customize league/association landing pages within the app.

What clubs/teams can do

This new app not only offers benefits to league operators, but there are also benefits to teams. The primary benefit is instantly creating an elevated gameday experience for all participants. All your games can have a matchday feel with content that team managers and parents can upload themselves, like graphics, in-game score updates, live streams and more.

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Marketing Tips: Website

The national approach

The official National 1 League website will launch prior to the inaugural season, and it'll house information about the platform itself, league operators, rules/handbook, schedules and standings, and more. US Club Soccer is building and maintaining this website with its technology partner GotSport, and with alignment of USYS and ECNL

What league operators can do

League operators are welcome to create a specific web page on their site dedicated to N1 or they can simply dedicate a section on their existing "Competitions" or "Programs" web page. Stick to the facts and link back to the official website; this isn't the place to editorialize about the platform. Consider taking the opportunity to celebrate the teams from your league/association that are competing in the platform. For example, include the club logos and note which teams and age groups those clubs have in the N1 competition. As the season progresses, prioritize the speed and accuracy of score reporting, so schedules and standings are always up to date. And be sure to call out the postseason opportunities available in your district and conference.

League operators that will schedule their teams in more than one N1 division must adhere to the following nomenclature:

- For two divisions: 'Premier 1' and 'Premier 2'
- For more than two divisions: 'Premier 1' and 'Premier 2' with 'Gold' and 'Navy' subdivisions

This division naming standard provides clarity to families that will be particularly useful in the promotion/relegation process from season to season. This will also create a league standard on the schedules & standings page of the N1 website, adding to the professionalism of the league.

What clubs/teams can do

In addition to accurately representing N1 on your website, it is also important to structure your team names online for games and tournaments in a consistent manner. We recommend all teams take the approach of: **[Club] [Age Group] [Gender] [Team] N1 [(State Abbreviation)]**. For example, this would look like: City FC U14B Green N1 (MI). This aligns with the typical naming convention across multiple competitions.

For your websites, you're welcome to create a web page specific to the competing N1 teams of your club, or you may choose to dedicate a section to N1 on your existing "Competitions" or "Programs" page. Whatever you do, we recommend an approach that is factual and is easy to maintain. Just like social media, a sustainable strategy is the best strategy. If you have a dedicated marketing manager, you'll have more bandwidth to write recap and preview articles. But if you don't, stick to the facts when promoting N1 and borrow content from the national office.