



U.S. Soccer

Disability Soccer Committee

Strategic Plan

February 2024 to February 2027





Disability Soccer Committee Overview

What is the Disability Soccer Committee?

<https://www.ussoccer.com/governance/committees/disability-soccer-committee>

The U.S. Soccer Disability Committee (otherwise known as the *Disability Soccer Committee* or DSC) serves the development, implementation, and growth of soccer for players, coaches, officials, and fans of various abilities. Composed of U.S. Soccer Disability Service Organizations (DSOs), the DSC is led by a U.S. Soccer Board-appointed chair and vice-chair supported by the U.S. Soccer Extended National Teams (ENT) department. The initiatives proposed in the 2024 Strategic Plan serve as measurable goals and a guide for the DSC to “move the needle” on access and opportunity as it relates to disability in and beyond U.S. Soccer in the United States.

Mission

The mission and purpose of the U.S. Soccer Disability Soccer Committee (DSC) is to bring together leaders within U.S. Soccer’s existing Disability Service Organizations (DSOs) and related member groups to grow access and opportunity for players, coaches, officials, and fans of all abilities. The DSC helps to “move the needle” for the disability soccer movement in the United States by serving U.S. Soccer’s mission and vision and each Disability Soccer Organization.

Member Role

The DSC **member** is a volunteer position appointed by their own DSO and related member group. The DSC member conducts themselves with the intention to “move the needle” for the disability soccer movement within and beyond U.S. Soccer locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Their role includes taking action in order to contribute to and produce the deliverables found within the Strategic Plan. Members of the DSC attend quarterly meetings and contribute to ongoing correspondence via phone and email related to the DSC. Members shall be required to commit in writing to serving on the DSC on an annual basis, with the intention to be active participants and to commit to the common goals of the organization while representing the interests of their specific DSO. If over the course of the year the member cannot fulfill their role or no longer wishes to be on the DSC, they may resign their membership. In this case, the DSO is responsible for appointing a replacement.



Governance

Formation

The DSC will be composed of one representative from each U.S. Soccer Disability Service Organization (DSO) and related member groups (i.e. those pending membership approval, other members of the federation) with the intent to serve the disability soccer movement. Each DSO selects their representative for the DSC and is responsible for providing an alternate when their appointee is unavailable or unable to serve. Representatives are appointed, or reappointed, on an annual basis. Oversight of the group includes a DSC Chair and Vice-Chair appointed by U.S. Soccer and a staff liaison from the U.S. Soccer Extended National Teams (ENT) department.

When the Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by U.S. Soccer per recommendation, they are expected to serve from their appointment date until the following year's Annual General Meeting (AGM). DSO representatives are subject to removal pending review of conduct by the DSC Chair, Vice Chair, staff liaison, and U.S. Soccer. Terms are annual, with the possibility of renewing roles pending re-appointment by the previously mentioned entities.

DSC governance develops and aligns with U.S. Soccer strategy and policy.

Structure

The DSC Chair and Vice Chair are charged with leading meetings, delegating responsibilities per initiatives within the strategic plan, and more. In addition to the DSC Chair and Vice Chair are all other members of the DSC. Their duties may vary, with the opportunity to take on specific roles regarding initiatives, meetings, and events. The DSC member attends quarterly meetings, contributes to the deliverables of the strategic plan, carries-out specific steps agreed to at meetings, and collaborates with group members to fulfill their role(s).

The DSC Chair also oversees the ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group (AaTWG). The AaTWG is adjunct to the DSC and exists to serve the DSC and its Strategic Plan. The AaTWG provides mentorship and experience to aspiring leaders in and around the disability soccer movement (see page 11 for more information). AaTWG members serve one-year terms, and typically have the following characteristics:

- Are actively involved or affiliated with at least one DSO;
- Less than 30 years old;
- Are members of the disability community or closely involved with the disability community through their work or community service activities;
- Have excellent communication skills and take ownership of assignments in order to meet deadlines.

AaTWG members are welcome at DSC meetings and often collaborate with DSC personnel to carry-out deliverables.



Initiatives Overview

The following initiatives aim to serve the DSC's greater mission to "move the needle" forward for the disability soccer movement in the United States.

Initiative #1

Grassroots Opportunities and Elite Pathways

In order to promote inclusion, growth, and opportunity for players, coaches, and officials with disabilities, the DSC aims to support the development and maintenance of participation and opportunities. Included are pathways that meet players "where they are" in their soccer journey and provide experiential learning for coaches, officials, and other professionals. These pathways include a focus on anyone who benefits from Grassroots-level programming and opportunities.

In addition, these pathways include a competitive focus for the performance-minded player, coach, and/or official aspiring to participate at the elite level. The "Grassroots Opportunities and Elite Pathways" initiative includes deliverables that will aid in the awareness of, recruitment for, development of, and sustainability of pathways for anyone with a disability and/or serving these individuals.

Initiative #2

Leveraging Future Global Events

The United States co-hosting of the 2026 Men's FIFA World Cup, as well as other global soccer competitions based in the US in the coming years, presents unique opportunities to gain international attention for the status of soccer in all its forms within and beyond U.S. Soccer. The DSC intends to promote inclusion and involvement of disability soccer in all conversations relating to the pending competitions. The "Leveraging Future Global Events" Initiative will endeavor to achieve disability soccer awareness by way of mindful employment strategies; disability-related presence in media and marketing; consultation for accessibility in World Cup and other U.S.-based proceedings; intentional scheduling of educational symposia and performance events in proximity to competition settings and dates; and more.

Initiative #3

Disability Soccer Month

The DSC has the privilege of celebrating all progress relating to the disability soccer movement in the United States and U.S. Soccer. Embodied in the annual U.S. Soccer Disability Soccer Month are elements of these celebrations as well as tangible items that promote awareness of the movement. These include and are not limited to: hybrid web-based athletic activities/events for players of all ability and the professionals who serve them; annual updates to and redistribution of the 'Modern Language Document' to influence the way we speak to and about individuals with disabilities; an interactive map identifying host locations for disability soccer programs; and opportunities to hear from well-known advocates in the disability soccer community. Further, marketing activity surrounding Disability Soccer Month should include both traditional media and social media, incorporate sponsorships, and leverage the reach and brand awareness of US Soccer to the country at large, not just the soccer community. The "Disability Soccer Month" initiative incorporates the active participation of the ADAPT and THRIVE Working Group, and provides leadership opportunities to promote awareness and celebrate progress as it relates to disability soccer.



Initiatives #1 Deliverables

Grassroots Opportunities and Elite Pathways

By the end of 2027, the DSC will

- Schedule and develop events dedicated to the professional development of staff serving players with disabilities
- Develop resources for DSO-related coach and official development
- Host shared DSO events providing an opportunity for each DSO's players to participate and play their given sport - including Grassroots and competitive programming
- Strive to Increase number of participating players in the DSOs by 1 member group
- Intentionally target underserved communities of persons with disabilities with awareness campaigns and local events that enhance participation rates
- Have presence in/with other U.S. Soccer groups to include disability language and efforts in other movements (i.e. U.S. Soccer Foundation, SheBelieves, Game Changers, United Soccer Coaches, Urban Soccer)
- Provide suggested changes to U.S. Soccer's website related to disability soccer opportunities including participation and performance pathways that provides a comprehensive view of both grassroots and competitive opportunities
- Advocate for the addition of a disability demographic-collection question on player registration forms throughout U.S. Soccer
- Source entities to help develop frame soccer and a national team for ID
- Mentor existing DSOs who attain higher member status aligned with the U.S. Soccer member standards
- Fundraise and apply for grants to support overcoming barriers to accessing soccer opportunities for players with disabilities
- Collaborate with U.S. Soccer staff to identify and engage potential sponsors and partners, etc.
- Educate all DSOs to be cognizant of the *full* spectrum of grassroots and performance
- Encourage implementation of U.S. Soccer safeguarding practices
- Suggest new wording for the presence of disability and adaptive soccer in all official U.S. Soccer bylaws, policies, etc., including renaming of the DSC
- Work with US Soccer staff to develop public service announcements focused on the disability soccer opportunities and pathways that can be hosted across various related platforms (i.e. U.S. Soccer website, match streaming)



Initiatives #2 Deliverables

Leveraging Future Global Events

By the end of 2027, the DSC will

- Advocate for mindful employment of persons with disabilities within the hiring process for the World Cup, including intentional sharing of job postings with the DSC
- Work with US Soccer, FIFA, and host city “local organizing committees” (LOCs) to organize and schedule athletic events (i.e. shared DSO training camp, exhibition matches, friendlies, and competitive matches around the dates of games.
- Work with US Soccer, FIFA, and host city “local organizing committees” (LOCs) to seek participation of DSO players presence in pre-game walk-outs and other match-day opportunities
- Work with U.S. Soccer to have disability soccer features in media and marketing with consideration to all DSOs.
- Work with US Soccer, FIFA, and host city “local organizing committees” (LOCs) to schedule educational events in various host cities where FIFA member federations’ disability soccer leaders can share best practices and collaborate on enhancing awareness, education, and opportunities to grow the number of disability soccer participants worldwide and enhance individual participants’ experiences.
- Work with US Soccer, Canada Soccer, and FeMexFut to design and implement collaborations that will help grow disability soccer access and awareness across all of North America.



Initiatives #3 Deliverables

Disability Soccer Month

By the end of 2027, the DSC will

- Work with U.S. Soccer staff to formally establish each December as Disability Soccer Month
- Work with U.S. Soccer to identify traditional mass media (television, newspaper, magazine, billboard, etc.) promotional opportunities that increase awareness of the DSOs and related participation/performance player opportunities, such as appearances on shows such as Good Morning America, ESPN SportsCenter, as well as articles/interviews in magazines, blogs, and podcasts
- Engage DSOs and their staff to similarly promote Disability Soccer Month on their various traditional and social media platforms, including cross-promotion of US Soccer initiated events.
- Put-on at least one (1)
 - player-focused event with a hybrid training component
 - professionals-focused event with coach and official education components
- Work with U.S. Soccer to provide updates to and publish the following on their website:
 - Modern Language Document
 - DSO Interactive Map
 - DSO calendar of events/competitions that extends for at least two years
- Conduct an annual census of players participating in the DSOs and include demographic information such as gender identity, race, disability category, etc.

2024 DSC Commitment to the Strategic Plan



The following members have signed and agreed to the Strategic Plan as written.

First Name	Last Name	DSO Affiliation(s)	E-Signature & Date
Ashley	Hammond	Chair	
Kate	Ward	Vice Chair	Kate Ward 2/15/2024
Joslynn	Bigelow	ADAPTandTHRIVE Working Group	<i>Joslynn Bigelow</i> 2/12/2024
Dan	Broome	Amputee Soccer	<i>Dan Broome, 2/14/24</i>
Scott	Snyder	AYSO EPIC	<i>Scott Snyder, 2/13/24</i>
Molly	Quinn	Blind Soccer	
Ashley	Hammond	CP Soccer	
Eddie	Perry	Deaf Soccer	<i>Edwin Perry 2/13/2024</i>
Kelly	Trevor	Down Syndrome Futsal	Kelly Trevor 2/14/24
Zach	Roloff	Dwarf Soccer	
Steve	Everett	Power Soccer	<i>Steve Everett 2/13/24</i>
Sean	Stake	Special Olympics NA Soccer	Craig Pippert 2/14/2024
David	Robinson	TOPSoccer	Dave Robinson, 2/13/2024
Shonna	Schroedl	U.S. Soccer Adult Council - Commissioner	<i>Shonna Schroedl 2/14/24</i>
John	Collins	U.S. Soccer Board of Directors	
Pascale	Rocca	U.S. Soccer Staff Liaison	<i>Pascale Rocca 2/15/2024</i>
Thomas	Sowinski	U.S. Youth Soccer	
Nelson	Akwari	U.S. Soccer Athletes Council	<i>Nelson Akwari 2/14/2024</i>
Eric	Lamberg	American Amputee Soccer Association	Eric Lamberg 2/14/2024



Wording from U.S. Soccer Federation

September 2018

The Disability Committee (“DC”) is a standing committee of the United States Soccer Federation, Inc. (the “Federation”). This charter sets out the responsibilities as outlined in U.S. Soccer Bylaws and Policies objectives, authority, responsibilities, composition and operation.

Objectives

As contemplated in Policy 431-1, the DC shall be responsible for developing ways to promote, develop and facilitate opportunities in all aspects of the game for players with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments. In addition, the DC has the following objectives:

- *Promote and provide information on soccer programs for athletes with a disability*
- *Continue to represent soccer players with disabilities within U.S. Soccer*
- *Educate U.S. Soccer and its members about soccer players with disabilities*
- *Expand and develop strategies to identify new players for disability soccer programs*
- *Work on allocating funding for disability soccer programs*
- *Recruit more disability soccer programs to join U.S. Soccer*

Membership

The Chair of the DC and its members shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. At least 20% of the members of the DC shall be Athletes.

Meetings

The DC shall meet with such frequency and at such intervals as it determines is necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities but at least once annually. The DC may permit attendance at meetings by management and such ex officio members as the Committee may determine appropriate or advisable from time to time. The DC shall report to the Board and the National Council on matters within the DC’s responsibilities at least once per year.

Authority

The DC is authorized to perform activities within the scope of the duties and responsibilities set out in this Charter and the U.S. Soccer Bylaws and Policies.

Duties and Responsibilities

Each year, the DC shall establish its goals for the year including measurable objectives and a timeline for accomplishing those goals. The DC shall submit its written goals to the Board on an annual basis. In addition, 45 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, the DC shall submit to the Secretary General a written annual report detailing the committee’s actions in satisfaction of its goals and objectives for the year.

In addition, the DC will advise and make recommendations to the U.S. Soccer Board regarding ways to promote, develop and facilitate opportunities in all aspects of the game for players with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments.



ADAPT *and* THRIVE WORKING GROUP

Guidelines

Updated March 2024



Table of Contents

3.....Working Group Mission

4.....Formation and Structure Guidelines

6.....ADAPT *and* THRIVE Working Group Member Role



Working Group Mission

The mission and purpose of the U.S. Soccer ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group (AaTWG) is to bring together aspiring leaders within U.S. Soccer’s existing Disability Service Organizations (DSOs) to grow access and opportunity for players of all abilities.

The AaTWG began in 2021 following the first-ever U.S. Soccer Disability Soccer Month (DSM). The group is overseen by the U.S. Soccer staff person liaising for the national Disability Soccer Committee (DSC). The group was formed under the premise that the disability soccer movement can only move forward given multi-generational engagement and a succession plan for leadership. Therefore, the group is composed of persons with and without disabilities serving the diversity, equity, and inclusion vision of U.S. Soccer through it’s primary initiative- the DSM.

The annual DSM occurs in December providing content celebrating the various DSOs, persons serving the disability soccer community, and more. DSM usually consists of hybrid events (virtual and in-person) opportunities for individuals to learn about the pathways within disability soccer, receive professional development to enhance services offered within and beyond the soccer community, and most importantly- opportunities to play!

The AaTWG supports the development and production of the DSM. The group performs an annual census that informs numbers reported to U.S. Soccer and at the DSM. The group also works year-round to update previous works such as the first-ever disability soccer Modern Language Document (MLD), interactive Map for players of any ability to identify opportunities to play nearest them, and more.

In sum, the ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group helps to “move the needle” for the disability soccer movement in the United States by serving U.S. Soccer’s mission and vision, the national Disability Soccer Committee, and each Disability Soccer Organization.



Formation, Structure, and Conduct Guidelines

Formation

The ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group (AaTWG) will be composed of representatives from each U.S. Soccer Disability Service Organization (DSO) with the members being at least 60% current or former players with disabilities. Oversight of the group includes an AaTWG leader appointed by the Disability Soccer Committee (DSC) Chairman with the Chair also providing routine supervision. All members are to be nominated by their DSO, however appointment to the working group includes:

- Letter of interest by the nominee
- Letter of recommendation by a member of their DSO
- Interview with AaTWG Leader and DSC Chair
- Signed commitment agreement

When members are appointed, they are expected to serve per the conduct guidelines and role descriptions to the following year’s Annual General Meeting (AGM). For the 2023/24 AaTWG, this looks like March 16 to 19, 2023 to March 2024. Members are subject to removal pending review of conduct by the AaTWG Leader and DSC Chair. Terms are annual, with the possibility of renewing roles pending re-nomination by the individual’s DSO as well as approval by the DSC Chair.

Structure

As aforementioned, the AaTWG will be led by an individual appointed by the DSC Chair. The AaTWG **Leader** communicates directly with the DSC Chair and attends DSC meetings. They are charged with leading meetings, delegating responsibilities per the initiatives assigned by the DSC, and more.

In addition to the leader are all other members of the AaTWG. Their duties may vary, with the opportunity to take on specific roles regarding initiatives, meetings, and events. In short, the AaTWG member attends monthly meetings, contributes to the planning of initiatives that contribute to the Annual U.S. Soccer Disability Soccer Month, carries-out specific steps agreed to at meetings for the aforementioned initiatives, and collaborates with group members to get the job done.

U.S. Soccer Staff Liaison	ADAPT <i>and</i> THRIVE Leader	ADAPT <i>and</i> THRIVE Member
		ADAPT <i>and</i> THRIVE Member
		ADAPT <i>and</i> THRIVE Member
		ADAPT <i>and</i> THRIVE Member



ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group Member Role

General Description:

-The ADAPT*and*THRIVE Working Group (AaTWG) **member** is a voluntary position nominated by their Disability Soccer Organization (DSO). The AaTWG member conducts themselves with the intention to “move the needle” for the disability soccer movement within and beyond U.S. Soccer locally, regionally, and nationally. Their role includes taking action in order to contribute to and produce the annual U.S. Soccer Disability Soccer Month in December of each year including initiatives such as a mid-year census of U.S. Soccer member groups, updating the Modern Language Document and interactive DSO Map, supporting the addition and development of DSOs, and more.

Responsibilities and Expectations:

- Attend all meetings for the AaTWG
- Respond to communications (i.e. emails, surveys)
- Complete action steps for initiatives as assigned. These can include, but are not limited to:
 - support production of U.S. Soccer’s Disability Soccer Month
 - collecting input and data from disability soccer organizations (DSOs)
 - taking notes during AaTWG and DSC meetings
 - collaborating with Disability Soccer community partners and stakeholders

Requirements:

- Affiliation with one or more of the U.S. Soccer’s Disability Soccer Organizations (i.e. current or former player, active volunteer or coach)
- Dependable and punctual (i.e. meets deadlines as provided)
- Willing to take on responsibilities and receive direction
- Detail-oriented (i.e. professional correspondence, quality production)
- Computer skills such as Google Suite, email, etc.

Time Commitment:

- monthly whole-group meetings and additional small-group meetings pending project needs (mandatory)
- DSC meetings (optional, however strongly encouraged)
- approximately six hours of independent or small-group work per month

Application:

- all members must submit a resume and cover letter to procca@ussoccer.org