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SOCCER ASSOCIATION**
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**2005 NATIONAL
CUP COMPETITIONS**

January 18, 2005

Dear Team Manager:

The United States Amateur Soccer Association (USASA) and the Oregon Adult Soccer Association (OASA) invite your team to participate in the 2005 National Cup Competitions in one or more of the following categories:

<u>Men's</u>	<u>Women's</u>
Open	Open
Amateur	Amateur
Over-30	Over-30
Under-23	Under-23

The National Cup Competitions have been held continuously since 1914 and are the nation's oldest national soccer competitions. This is the only program in which **any** team affiliated with the USASA can enter and have the opportunity to play at a higher level of competition against other teams at the same competitive level throughout the United States and be declared a National Cup Champion. The opportunity is here for you to take advantage — do it NOW!

If you are interested in the Men's Open Cup or Women's Open Cup, please call or e-mail for more information. The base entry fee is \$225. The Men's Open Cup is the event that professional teams, including MLS teams, have been entering the last four years and is developing into our equivalent of the English FA Cup.

If you are interested in the U-23, the fees are the same but the entry deadline is different from the other Cups (April 30th). Please call or e-mail now so that we can notify you when the U-23 entry information is available.

Please understand that the National Cup Competitions operate under special rules which need to be taken seriously. The rules and procedures are determined by the USASA and are intended to be formal. **The Cup rules will be strictly enforced.** In some parts of the U.S., lawsuits relating to the failure to comply with the National Cup Competitions rules are filed on a regular basis. We do not intend to allow that to happen here.

We are here to help you with complying with the rules, within reason, but ultimately you will be responsible for compliance. Failure to follow the rules, including mundane things such as using the uniform colors that you have declared, could lead to forfeit.

You will receive a full copy of the rules after your entry has been accepted. The playing rules of significance relate to substitutions and breaking ties. In the open, amateur, under-23 and divisions, each team is permitted a maximum of three substitutions, with no reentry allowed; in the Over-30 divisions, each team is permitted a maximum of five substitutions, with no reentry allowed. In all national games, and regional and state playoff games in which a winner must be determined, if a game is tied after 90 minutes, the teams will play a 30-minute overtime (sudden death or "golden goal"), and if the game is still tied at that point, kicks from the mark will be utilized.

There are some rules that are enforced for the National Cups competitions that are not enforced for OASA league and tournament play. We strongly encourage you to have all of your players comply with these rules if you enter the Cups. The Cups administrators (and some of your opponents) will be actively looking for violations, which if found likely will lead to forfeitures. Now is the time to deal with them, while there is time, not two weeks before the regional finals, when there is not enough time.

- Under the Cup rules, only amateur players are permitted to play in the amateur and U-23 divisions. If any player has ever signed a professional contract or otherwise played on a professional form with an affiliated team (such as with the Seattle Sounders, the Portland Pride, the Salem Surge or the Portland Firebirds, but not the Portland Pythons), and has not gone through the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) procedure to be reinstated to amateur status, then that player still is a professional player, no matter how many years it has been since playing professionally.

If one of your players has any doubt, please have him or her call the USSF Professional Player Office at (312) 808-1300 for help. The OASA office can assist a player in filing the paperwork leading to reinstatement, but we do not have the ability to interpret the rules. If you use a professional player in a division requiring amateur players, you should assume that someone will notice and file a protest and that the protest will succeed and lead to your team forfeiting.

- Furthermore, if you are a former professional who has not reinstated to amateur status, you will be viewed as improperly registered and ineligible for any of the divisions unless you are currently registered with the USSF as a professional. Your Oregon player card will not be considered valid.
- Finally, there is a FIFA regulation that says that, before playing in the U.S., any player who immigrated to the U.S. after age 16 must get a release from the national association in his or her native country, and any player who immigrated to the U.S. after age 14 and before age 17 is supposed to complete a USSF form. Seeking such a release and providing such a form are relatively simple procedures that can be done through the OASA office.

If your adult team has not registered with the OASA since September 1, 2004 (i.e., your team did not play in an OASA league this fall), then the team must register with the OASA before submitting a National Cup Competitions entry. Contact the OASA office for information.

If your team desires to participate in the National Cup Competitions this year, complete (in full) the enclosed entry form and return the form and indicated fees to the OASA office. Make sure that your entry form is completely filled out **and typed**. This includes your team's uniform colors, including socks (you must have two pairs of socks, in different colors). If the information changes later, be sure to let us know. Payment must be made to the "Oregon Adult Soccer Association" by cashier's check or money order — **no personal checks will be accepted.**

Here are the deadlines (except for the U-23 Cup division):

- Entry forms completed **fully** and accompanied with payment in the **proper form** and in the **proper amount** must be received at the OASA office by the close of business of the OASA office on Tuesday, March 22nd, 2005.
- Entry forms will not be accepted if received at the OASA office after the close of business of the OASA office on March 22nd 1, 2005.
- Incomplete or illegible entry forms and payment in the wrong form or in the wrong amount will be returned.

Here is how the fees have been determined:

- \$150 for all of the events (except the Men's Open Cup and Women's Open Cup that was noted above), which are the USASA fees.
- \$25 Region IV fee
- \$75 to help defray the OASA's costs of administering the Competitions.
- \$500 as a bond to assure that your team plays all of its scheduled games and complies with the Cup rules. If your teams fails to play a scheduled game, the bond probably will be forfeited; it also will be used to pay any fine levied against your team. Otherwise, the bond will be returned when your team has no more games to play (when it has been knocked out of the Competitions or when it has become the national champion).

After the March 22nd 2005, deadline, we will contact the teams that have entered about conducting intrastate playoffs. The format will be based on the number of teams and our ability to obtain playing dates, fields and referees. If your team is the only team entered in your division, then your team will advance directly to regional play.

The Oregon representatives will go to the Region IV finals, which will be held in a round robin format. The good news is that you will play more than one or two games; the bad news is that it will be a four-day event which will include two week days. Except for the Men's Open Cup, the regional finals will be held in the California area on May 20-22 and the national finals will be in Dallas, Texas on August 5-7.

Before you sit down to fill out the entry form, be certain that your team is serious about entering the National Cups Competitions. Make sure that your worst nightmare is not having your team actually qualifying to go to the regional finals or the national finals. Absolutely no one will have any sympathy if you ask to be excused later because your team cannot afford the travel costs or the time off from work. If those are a problem, then your team probably should not enter.

- You have to consider the potential expenses your team might incur. The OASA may provide a small subsidy to go to the regional finals (which are Thursday through Sunday), but your team will have to come up with the bulk of the cost, including airfare, lodging, food and other expenses. If your team advances to the national finals, the USASA will provide a subsidy that is based in part on mileage and in part on the number of teams entered in your division in our region, and the OASA again may pay a small subsidy, but your team will have to pay for the balance of your team's airfare, lodging, food and other expenses.
- You have to consider the time off from work that your players may need to travel to and play at these events. One final reminder – the regional and national finals involve playing games on weekdays.

Decide **now** whether you have the money, or can raise the money, to cover these expenses and have the necessary commitment from your players to play and to take time off from work. Do not come around later telling us that you cannot afford to participate. You will not like the answer or the long-term consequences.

If you have questions, please try contacting the OASA office by telephone or e-mail. If the person there cannot answer the question, it will be relayed to me and I will get the answer.

All teams are encouraged to consider entering the National Cup Competitions. We have highlighted the potential problems with entering only because we know from past experience that some teams struggle with foreseeing the costs and following the rules (which really are not all that complicated). All that we are saying is that you should not enter your team unless (1) you have considered the costs you might incur and are prepared to deal with them and (2) you have considered that, unlike other competitions that you have entered, this one has rules that are rigorously followed.

For those who take the plunge and do enter, best of luck to all! We will do everything reasonable we can to support you. Remember that once you enter regional play you will be representing the OASA — so do your best and play hard but fairly and follow all of the Cup rules.

Sincerely,

Anne Braghero
State Cup Commissioner