

Forwarding on behalf of MLS NEXT Pro:



NEWS RELEASE

MLS NEXT PRO TO SHIFT COMPETITION CALENDAR IN 2027

Transitional Sprint Season to be Followed by First Summer-to-Spring Season



NEW YORK, NEW YORK (August 27, 2026) – MLS NEXT Pro announced today its plans to shift the league's competition calendar in 2027. To align with top global soccer leagues and Major League Soccer, MLS NEXT Pro will begin with a Sprint Season in February 2027, followed by the first full Summer-to-Spring Season in 2027-28.

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2027 Sprint Season (February 2027-May 2027)

As a transition from the current calendar to the new Summer-to-Spring calendar, MLS NEXT Pro will feature an initial Sprint Season, which will carry the weight of a traditional season. Every club will play 14 regular season matches, running mid-February through late

April, followed by four rounds of Playoffs and concluding with MLS NEXT Pro Cup in late May.

2027-28 Summer-to-Spring Season (July 2027-June 2028)

The shift to the Summer-to-Spring Season will begin with the 2027-28 season, kicking off in July 2027 and ending with MLS NEXT Pro Cup in June 2028, including a winter break.

The regular season will consist of 28 matches per club, with the first half taking place from mid-July through mid-December. A winter break will be followed by the second half of the season, from early February through early May. The ensuing Playoffs will culminate with MLS NEXT Pro Cup in early June.

"This is a pivotal chapter for MLS NEXT Pro and the sport of soccer in our country," said **Eddie Pope, SVP, Competition & Operations, MLS NEXT Pro and SVP, MLS Sporting Development.** "With our strategic partnership with KKR announced earlier this year, the tremendous momentum surrounding the FIFA World Cup this summer, and the transition to a new competition calendar in 2027, we are very excited about the next phase of growth for our league."

Player Pathway Schedule Alignment

With MLS NEXT Pro shifting its calendar to the Summer-to-Spring format, all three levels of the MLS player pathway will share the same calendar beginning in 2027-28. The continuity will provide additional opportunities for player movement between MLS, MLS NEXT Pro and MLS NEXT, in turn increasing player development opportunities and efficiencies.

To date, since the launch of MLS NEXT Pro in March 2022:

- 1,000+ MLS players have been loaned to MLS NEXT Pro
- 270 MLS NEXT Pro players have signed MLS first team contracts
- 1,300+ MLS NEXT Academy players have competed in MLS NEXT Pro

About MLS NEXT Pro

Launched in 2022 by Major League Soccer, MLS NEXT Pro is a professional men's soccer league in the United States and Canada that completes the pro player pathway from MLS NEXT to MLS first teams. MLS NEXT Pro continues to grow the game through innovation and access, bringing professional soccer to new communities and creating opportunities both on and off the field. MLS NEXT Pro celebrates its fifth season in 2026 with 30 teams, 27 MLS-affiliated and three independent, Carolina Core FC, Chattanooga FC and Connecticut United FC. Additional MLS-affiliated and independent clubs will join in the years ahead, including Forest City Cleveland, Jacksonville Armada FC, AC Grand Rapids, and The Island FC. For more information about MLS NEXT Pro, visit mlsnextpro.com.

