**PROMOTION-RELEGATION PUBLIC-FACING FAQS**

**What is promotion and relegation, and why is the USL implementing it?**

Promotion and relegation is a system in which teams are promoted to a higher division or relegated to a lower division based on their performance during the season. The USL is introducing this structure to create a fully interconnected, three-tier professional pathway following the launch of USL Division One.

By implementing promotion and relegation, the USL is aligning with the global soccer model and reinforcing its commitment to long-term growth, player development, and fan engagement. Every match will matter—from the first kick to the final whistle—making the season-long action even more thrilling for fans, players, and clubs alike.

**How will the USL’s promotion and relegation system work?**

The USL’s professional men’s soccer structure will consist of three divisions:

* USL Division One (newly launched)
* USL Championship (Division Two)
* USL League One (Division Three)

Teams will earn promotion or face relegation based on their season performance, ensuring a dynamic and competitive landscape where ambition is rewarded.

**Why is the USL making this move now?**

Soccer in the U.S. is experiencing unprecedented growth, driven by global events like the FIFA 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Now is the time to take bold steps that elevate the game, expand opportunities, and position the USL as a leader in shaping the future of soccer in the country.

**How does this align the USL with global soccer?**

Promotion and relegation is the standard in leagues worldwide, from the English Premier League to La Liga and beyond. This system strengthens the USL’s connection to the global game, making it more appealing for international players, fans, and investors. It also gives U.S.-based clubs a structure that fosters ambition and competitiveness on a global level.

**How does this benefit the quality of play?**

Promotion and relegation raises the stakes for every club — driving investment in players, facilities, and infrastructure. The system ensures that every match carries weight, leading to higher-intensity competition, improved player development, and an elevated level of play across all divisions. Increased exposure to high-pressure matches accelerates growth in player development and increases the platform for players to be recognized on the international stage.

**What does this mean for fans?**

Fans can expect a more exciting and unpredictable season, where every match has consequences. Whether their club is fighting for promotion or battling to avoid relegation, the excitement unfolds from day one, creating deeper emotional connections, stronger rivalries, and an overall more thrilling experience.

**How will this impact clubs and communities?**

Promotion and relegation strengthens the connection between clubs and their communities. Fans will have more reasons to support their teams throughout the entire season, knowing each match has real stakes. For communities, this structure provides a pathway for local clubs to climb the ranks and reach the highest levels of professional soccer, creating new opportunities and fostering deeper local pride.

**Will this system expand opportunities for clubs and players?**

Yes. Promotion and relegation incentivizes investment, strengthens club development, and provides a direct pathway for clubs and players to rise through the ranks. The system opens doors for new talent, new markets, and deeper fan engagement, ultimately growing the sport at all levels.

**What are the next steps?**

The USL is rolling out this transformative system with a structured timeline and strategic planning. More details will be shared in the coming months as the league works closely with clubs, partners, and stakeholders to implement this historic change.