CONSTITUTION

Adopted by the Founding Clubs and
Approved by the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, June 1993
As amended and approved by the Members through November 25, 2011

1. NAME

This league will be named the ***Massachusetts Premier League, Inc.***, hereafter referred to as ***MAPLE***. ***MAPLE*** is a league affiliated with the MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, the UNITED STATES YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, the UNITED STATE SOCCER FEDERATION and with FIFA and, as such, operates in accordance with the rules and procedures of those organizations except as amended or altered in this constitution and the attached by-laws and working procedures.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of ***MAPLE*** is to provide a league for teams who want the highest level of competition available in Massachusetts in order to prepare for higher levels of competition. ***MAPLE*** is open to all teams wanting to compete for State, Regional and National Cups.

3. MEMBERSHIP

a. **Admission.** Membership shall be open to any and all clubs. A Club consists of one or more teams sharing a common name, organized in concert for the conduct of play. Membership shall become effective upon acceptance of the application of one or more of the club's teams by ***MAPLE*** or by other method certified by the Commission.

b. **Suspension.** Any member of ***MAPLE*** may be suspended or expelled by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the full Commission. The member involved shall be notified of the intended action and may make a statement to the Commission before the resolution is put to a vote. The decision of the Commission shall be binding pending any legally available appeal.

4. FINANCIAL POLICY

a. **Fiscal Year.** The ***MAPLE*** fiscal year shall begin on August 1 and end on July 31 of the following year.

b. **Budget.** A proposed budget for the forthcoming year shall be prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the Commission.

c. **Bank.** All monies shall promptly be deposited to the ***MAPLE*** account to be established at a federally insured Massachusetts bank. All monies not required for immediate operational use shall be held in an interest-bearing account at such bank.

d. **Sources and Uses of Funds.** ***MAPLE*** funds shall come from team entry fees, from fines and penalties, and from special assessments for program events. Fees for each program will be determined on a yearly basis by the Commission. These funds shall be used for facility, administrative and program costs, including referee fees. All debts will be paid when due. All funds shall be spent only in the interest of ***MAPLE***. ***MAPLE*** shall have no authority to borrow funds or to incur indebtedness, except as may be occasioned by vendor purchases on normal commercial terms.

e. **Disposition of Funds.** Should ***MAPLE*** be dissolved, all funds in the ***MAPLE*** account will be donated to a recognized federally tax exempt soccer organization, qualifying under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, to be determined by the Commission.

5. PROGRAMS

MAPLE will sponsor and operate the following programs on a seasonal year basis as defined by USYSA:

a**. DIVISION 1.** League play for Boys and Girls Under 14 to Under 18. U14 will consist of ten teams per age and gender group. U15-U18 will consist of eight teams per age and gender group. Division Championship trophies will be awarded to the first place spring season finisher in each age and gender group through Under 18.

b. DIVISION 2. League play for Boys and Girls Under 14 to Under 18. U14 will consist of ten teams per age and gender group. U15-U18 will consist of eight teams per age and gender group from member clubs, not qualifying for Division 1. Places in Division 2 shall be determined on the basis specified in this Constitution.

c. DIVISION 3. League play for Boys and Girls Under 14 through Under 18. The purpose of Division 3 is to provide a playing forum for new and other teams wishing to develop their competitiveness in order to be able to play successfully in Divisions 1 and 2

During the fall season, Division 3 Under 14 is open to any team wishing to apply. For the spring season Division 3 sections for the Under 14 age group will be restricted to ten teams qualifying on the basis of a qualifying tournament organized and structured by the Commission. If, after the fall Division 3 tournament, a slot becomes open in Under 14 Division 3, it will be offered first to the non-qualifying team with the best qualifying tournament record.

Division 3 Under 15 to Under 18 are restricted to eight teams per age and gender group, chosen on the basis of results of league play during the previous spring and a qualifying tournament held in June. If a slot becomes open in Under 15 to Under 18 Division 3, it will be offered to the non-qualifying team with the best qualifying tournament record. Subject to the above restrictions, Division 3 is open to all teams from member clubs who have not qualified for Division 1 or 2.

d. DEVELOPMENTAL DIVISION. League play for Boys and Girls Under 10 to Under 13. The Developmental Division is open to all teams that apply.

Play for Under 10 Boys and Girls will have an 8 v 8 format and will be developmental in nature. Teams will be randomly mixed within gender and no official standings will be kept.

Play for Under 11 Boys and Girls will have an 8 v 8 format and be developmental in nature; however, official standings will be kept. There will be a tournament at the conclusion of the spring season organized on the basis specified in this Constitution.

Play for Under 12 Boys and Girls may have both an 11 v 11 format and a 8 v 8 format and be developmental in nature; however, official standings will be kept. Sections will be re-aligned for the spring season based on fall results. There will be a tournament at the conclusion of the spring season organized on the basis specified in this Constitution.

Play for Under 13 Boys and Girls will have an 11 v 11 format and be developmental in nature; however, official standings will be kept. Sections will be re-aligned for the spring season based on fall results. There will be a tournament at the conclusion of the spring season organized on the basis specified in this Constitution to determine divisions for Under 14.

6. ORGANIZATION OF PLAY

a. League Play. League play for the Under 14 age groups for Divisions 1, 2 & 3 will consist of play in both the fall and spring. League play for Divisions 1, 2 & 3 for the Under 15 to Under 18 age groups will be in the spring only. The length of seasons and the numbers of games played in each will be determined by the Commission.

League play for the Developmental Division will consist of play in both the fall and spring. Teams will be placed in sections for league play. The number of and distribution of teams among sections will be at the discretion of the Commission. During any given season, teams will play within their respective sections

In all programs, teams will, to the extent possible, play each team in their section or division once in any season, and, unless necessary to make the required number of games, will not play the same opponent twice during the same season. In all programs, the Commission may, in its sole discretion, combine age groups or schedule cross-over games for the purpose of meeting State, Regional or National requirements for league play or otherwise for the good of the game.

b. Divisional Qualification and Promotion & Relegation.

Fall: Under 14 only. Promotion to and relegation from Divisions 1 and 2 for the spring season will be determined at the end of the fall season. The 10th place Division 1 team will automatically be relegated to Division 2. The 1st place Division 2 team will be automatically promoted to Division 2. The 9th place finisher in the higher division will play the 2nd place finisher in the lower division. Exact procedures can be found in the ***MAPLE*** Tournaments section of the website.

Spring: Under 14 and older only. Placement in, promotion to and relegation from Divisions 1 and 2 for the next higher age group will be determined at the conclusion of the State Cups and any additional play-offs required, for play during the following seasonal year, on the following basis:

1. **Division 1.**

   i. The two Massachusetts State Cup finalists will automatically qualify for Division 1, provided that they currently

play or have previously played in ***MAPLE***.

ii. Among Division 1 teams not already qualifying under subparagraph (i), the highest finishing teams from the previous spring League season (six for age Under 14; four for ages Under 15 to Under 18 - subject to the special rule for Regional league participants) will also qualify for Division 1.

iii. For ages Under 15 to Under 18, the previous spring's Division 2 League champion, if not already qualified, will qualify for Division 1.

iv. For ages Under 15 to Under 18, the eighth place Division 1 team from the previous spring League, if not a State Cup finalist, will automatically be relegated to Division 2.

v. For ages Under 15 to Under 18, the final spot or spots will be filled on the basis of a playoff involving all remaining Division 1 teams not already qualified or relegated and the highest finishing Division 2 team from the previous spring League season not already qualified.

vi. No more than 2 teams from the same club can be in Division 1. The same club is considered to be one owned, managed, controlled or operated by a single entity.

*[SPECIAL RULING BY THE COMMISSION FOR REGIONAL LEAGUE PARTICIPANTS: Region 1 has established a regional premier league for certain ages. This league - called the Region I Directors' League - is open to the previous year's Region 1 semi-finalists and certain other teams selected on the basis of competitive application. A Massachusetts team participating in the Region 1 League might decide to not play in **MAPLE**, but may be eligible through Regional League play for the State Cup competition per State Cup rules.*

*A club may retain their **MAPLE** Division 1 place. In doing so the Region 1 Directors' League team is considered as not having left **MAPLE** regardless of whether or not there are variances between the **MAPLE** team and the Region 1 team rosters. In that case, the ruling described below is not applicable.*

*A club deciding to have a team play solely in the Region 1 Directors' League must surrender its **MAPLE** Division 1 place for that age/gender group to **MAPLE**. The **MAPLE** Commission has determined that such a team would - if it chose to or had to return to **MAPLE** following an absence - qualify for Division 1 if it reached the State Cups semi-finals. In this case, the number of automatic qualifiers under item (ii) above would go from 6 to 5 for age Under 14 or 4 to 3 for ages Under 15 to Under 18.*

*A team that leaves **MAPLE** to play in the Region 1 Directors' League, Northeast Regional League, DAP or ECNL, or a team that has been denied a chance to return to one of these leagues, that has failed to qualify for **MAPLE** through existing means will be given the opportunity to play in the promotion/relegation games of the **MAPLE** division which they had previously occupied, if they so choose.]*

In the event that fewer than the necessary number of teams qualify for Division 1 pursuant to this process, then teams who were in the playoff will qualify based on results of the playoff. If additional spots still remain or if playoff results are inconclusive, then otherwise non-qualifying Division 1 teams in the order of their finish, then Division 2 teams in the order of their finish, then new teams shall be placed in Division 1 until all places are filled. If, in the circumstances where new teams can enter Division 1, more new teams apply than there are places available, the Commission shall provide for selection among the new applicants by preseason competition or such other method as it deems appropriate.

All teams qualifying for Division 1 play for the next highest age group must declare their intention to play in Division 1 by the date announced by the Commission but no later than December 15 if no other date has been announced. If a qualified team declines to play in Division 1 the Commission will invite the next qualifying team based on these rules.

2. Division 2

i. Any team or teams relegated from Division 1 will automatically qualify for Division 2.

ii. If Division 3 had four or more teams in the relevant age group the previous spring, then:

a) The highest finishing team from Division 3, based on spring League play only, will automatically qualify for Division 2, replacing the 8th place Division 2 team. The latter team will automatically be relegated to Division 3; and

(b) An additional Division 2 place will go to the winner of a playoff between the second highest finishing

Division 3 team in the relevant age group and the 7th place or 6th and 7th place Division 2 teams (depending on the number necessary to maintain Division 2 at eight teams). The loser or losers of this playoff will be relegated to or remain in division 3 as appropriate.

I In the event that fewer than eight qualifying teams enter Division 2 pursuant to either of the previous paragraphs, then the playoff loser or losers will qualify, and if additional spots still remain then otherwise non-qualifying Division 2 teams in the order of their finish, then Division 3 teams in the order of their finish, then new teams shall be placed in Division 2 until all eight places are filled If, in the circumstances where new teams can enter Division 2, more new teams apply than there are places available, the Commission shall provide for selection among the new applicants by preseason competition or such other method as it deems appropriate.

If a qualified team declines to play in Division 2 the Commission will invite the next qualifying team based on these rules and the team will have 7 days to accept and pay the league fee.

No more than 2 teams from the same club can be in Division 2. The same club is considered to be one owned, managed, controlled or operated by a single entity.

3. Division 3

No more than 2 teams from the same club can be in Division 3. The same club is considered to be one owned, managed, controlled or operated by a single entity.

4. Play-off Format. Playoff games and any necessary tie-break events will be scheduled by the Commission.

In general, the format will be as follows:

i. Two teams. If a play-off involving only two teams is necessary to determine qualification for Division 1 or 2, the play-off will be a single game. If a winner is not determined in regulation time, then sudden victory overtime to a maximum of two regulation overtime periods as specified for the age group will be played. If overtime play fails to produce a winner, then FIFA "kicks from the Penalty Mark" will decide the winner.

ii. Three teams. If three teams are involved in the playoff each team will play each other once. If no winner is determined on points, then head-to-head, then goal differential to a maximum of 6 per game, then fewest goals allowed, then FIFA "kicks from the Penalty Mark" will decide the winner.

iii. Four teams. If four teams are involved in the playoff for a Under 13 to Under 16 spot, a four team/three game round robin format will be used. The same system as used in the three-team format will be used to determine the winner or winners. If four teams are involved in the playoff for a Under 17 and older spot, a semi-final/final game format will be used. Ties at the end of these will be resolved by sudddeath overtime

to a maximum of two regulation periods. If these fail to produce a winner then FIFA "kicks from the Penalty

Mark" will decide the winner.

d. Developmental Division Tournaments. Seasonal play for the Under 10 - Under 13 age groups will take place in both the fall and spring according to the procedures set out in paragraph (a) above. Post-spring season tournaments for the Under 11, Under 12 and Under 13 age groups are as follows:

K.C. Andre Cup. An Under 11 Tournament shall be organized and scheduled by the Commission for a time after the end of the spring League season.

Paul Irwin Cup. An Under 12 Tournament shall be organized and scheduled by the Commission for a time after the end of the spring League season.

U13 Tournament. To determine placement in Division 1 & Division 2 for the Under 14 season.

e. Discretionary Exceptions. On application of any member club, the Commission will consider alterations to the divisional or sectional placement system in specific circumstances for a single season. If, after consideration and giving all potentially affected parties an opportunity to be heard, the Commission finds by a two-thirds majority that the strict application of this system would be manifestly unjust, the Commission may alter it in those specific circumstances to correct such injustice.

7. GOVERNING BODY

a. ***MAPLE*** will be governed by a body to be called the **Premier League Commission** ("Commission") composed of eleven members, ten of whom are to be elected by the membership as follows:

i. **Executive Officers.** The Executive Officers shall be the Commissioner, the Secretary and the Treasurer, elected as follows:

Commissioner for a three-year term, commencing with the 1999 Annual General Meeting. The Commissioner shall not be associated with any club or team involved in ***MAPLE.***

Secretary for a three-year term, commencing at the 2000 Annual General Meeting; and

Treasurer for a three-year term, commencing at the 2001 Annual General Meeting.

ii. **Commissioners-at-Large.** There shall be seven Commissioners-at-Large, divided into two groups and elected as follows:

Group 1 composed of four Commissioners to be elected in odd numbered years for a two-year term and;

Group 2 composed of three Commissioners to be elected in even numbered years for a two year term.

iii. The **MYSA National Championship Series Director** shall serve, *ex-officio*, as the eleventh member of the Commission.

No more than two members of the same Club may be members of the Commission at any one time. The Commissioner, in consultation with the Commission, may appoint other persons to sit in advisory, non-voting capacities as he or she deems appropriate.

Nominating Committee. In each year, the Commissioner shall appoint, on or before May 1, a Nominating Committee for the purpose of submitting nominations for those positions on the Commission whose terms expire at the next Annual General Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of five members, not more than three of whom may be then current members of the Commission. The Nominating Committee shall submit its report to the Commission on or before August 1 each year, and the report of the Nominating Committee shall be included in the Notice of Annual Meeting.

b. The Commission will be responsible for all League policy, and in furtherance thereof may, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, enact such by-laws and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the implementation of those policies. The Commission shall be responsible for all communication with MYSA and its constituent entities, with other affiliated Leagues and with other State organizations.

c. The Commissioner will be invested with the Commission's executive authority between meetings, and he or she shall ensure compliance with this Constitution, and by-laws and regulations enacted pursuant hereto. The Commissioner will chair all meetings of the Commission or membership. The Commissioner will vote only to break ties at ***MAPLE*** meetings.

d The Commission will elect a Deputy Commissioner from among its members. In the absence or unavailability of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner shall perform his or her functions.

e. The Secretary will notify all members of annual and special general meetings. He or she will be responsible for maintaining and certifying ***MAPLE*** membership, for keeping its records, and for noticing and setting the agenda for meetings of the membership. Notifications of meetings may be by e-mail or by postal mail to the most recently designated club contact.

f. The Treasurer will prepare the annual budget, authorize all expenses for ***MAPLE***, and maintain records of and report periodically on its finances to the Commission and the membership.

g. The Commissioner, Treasurer and Secretary shall serve respectively as President, Treasurer and Clerk of the corporation for purposes of M.G.L. c. 180. The Commission shall serve as the Board of Directors of the corporation for these purposes.

h. Commissioners other than an *ex officio* member shall serve from the General Meeting of their election until the next General Meeting, as will all officers. Officers and Commissioners may be re-elected.

i. A quorum for the transaction of Commission business shall consist of a majority of the members thereof, provided that such majority includes either the Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner.

j. Unless otherwise stated herein, or in the by-laws or regulations, all decisions of the Commission shall be by an affirmative vote of at least four members of the Commission.

k. The Commission, to the extent and in the event that a situation or situations arise not controlled or covered by this Constitution or the By-Laws, may take any and all action or actions that the Commission deems appropriate in the interest of ***MAPLE***, to promote and enhance the game of soccer, and, in general, for the Good of the Game.

8. ADMINISTRATION

a. Organization and Operation. Responsibility for the ***MAPLE*** shall be vested in the Commission. The Commission shall elect from its members such officers as may be necessary to the discharge of its responsibilities. The Commission shall be fully responsible for scheduling, referees, publications and other written communication, application, qualification, registration and rostering of players and teams, play and all other matters incident to the implementation of programs. To this end the Commission may enact and promulgate regulations for its programs.

b. Executive Director. The Commission shall appoint an Executive Director who shall perform and coordinate the regular operational functions of ***MAPLE***. The Executive Director, who need not be an elected member of the Commission, will consult with and be guided by the decisions of Mass Youth Soccer in matters concerning rostering and player qualification.

c. Protest Officer. A Protest Officer shall be appointed by the Commissioner. The Protest Officer shall not be a member of the Commission or associated with the clubs or teams involved in ***MAPLE***. Refer to By-Law Section 13(a) for protest procedure.

d. Appeals Officer. An Appeals Officer shall be appointed by the Commissioner. The Appeals Officer shall not be a member of the Commission or associated with the clubs or teams involved in ***MAPLE***. Refer to By-Law Section 13(b) for appeal procedure.

9. MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

a. Annual Meeting. The members shall meet annually in the month of September at a time and place to be determined by the Commission. The meeting shall elect the members of the Commission for the following seasonal year, consider and make recommendations to the Commission concerning the Treasurer's report and the budget for the following year, review and approve

or amend by-laws and regulations, and act upon such other matters as may be brought before the meeting by a member, a member of the Commission, or the Mass Youth Soccer Board of Directors.

b. Special Meetings. A special meeting may be called by the Commission or by any four member clubs to consider such matters as may be included in a written notice to the Secretary requesting such meeting.

c. Voting. Each member club shall be entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of teams it has in ***MAPLE*** at the time of the meeting, or, in the case of any meeting between the end of the State Cups and August 1, had the previous season. Proxy voting is allowed. An individual may cast the votes for one organization only. The league recognizes the club contacts and presidents as the voting representatives. If the club is designating another individual to cast the votes, that designation must be made by the club president in writing (by e-mail, postal mail or hand delivery) prior to the meeting. Members of the Commission, to the extent not accredited by a club, are each entitled to one vote upon accreditation of the Secretary. Members of the Commission accredited to the meeting by a member club shall only be entitled to cast his or her club's vote. Unless otherwise specified herein, all votes shall be by a simple majority of those present and voting.

d. Quorum. Forty (40) accredited votes shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business.

e. Notice. The Secretary shall give 30 days written notice of all meetings, setting out the agenda thereof and including all relevant reports and other material, to all member clubs and the Commission.

10. **AMENDMENT**

This Constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds majority of a duly called meeting of the membership.