SC WAVE · MLS NEXT HOMEGROWN & ACADEMY

MLS NEXT FEST 2026 FAMILY GUIDE

December 2 – 13, 2026 · Arizona (Scottsdale & Mesa). Everything SC Wave Homegrown and Academy families need to know.

⚠ Book travel carefully — MLS NEXT will not adjust the schedule for early flights. Kickoff times are not finalized until closer to the event, so flights must be booked around the potential first and last kickoff times below — not a guess at the actual match time. Clubs that book outside these windows are on their own.

SC WAVE TEAMS ATTENDING

HOMEGROWN DIVISION	all 6 age groups	U13 U14 U15 U16 U17 U19
ACADEMY DIVISION	not U15 or U19	U13 U14 U16 U17

AGE GROUP SCHEDULE

AGE	FORMAT	DATES	MATCHES	DIVISION(S)
U13	Tournament	Dec 11–13	4 in 3 days	Homegrown + Academy
U14	Tournament	Dec 8–10	4 in 3 days	Homegrown + Academy
U15	Tournament	Dec 10–13	4 in 4 days	Homegrown only
U16	Tournament	Dec 8–11	4 in 4 days	Homegrown + Academy
U17	Showcase	Dec 2–4	3 in 3 days	Homegrown + Academy
U19	Showcase	Dec 5–7	3 in 3 days	Homegrown only

For U13, U14, U16 & U17, Homegrown and Academy teams compete on the same dates. This is each team's regular schedule — it does not include invite-only “Best Of” showcase matches, a separate coach-nomination-based selection. Your team's coach will reach out directly if your player is selected for one of those.

DAY-BY-DAY CALENDAR

December 2026

AGE	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
U13										PLAY	PLAY	PLAY
U14							PLAY	PLAY	PLAY			
U15									PLAY	PLAY	PLAY	PLAY
U16							PLAY	PLAY	PLAY	PLAY		
U17	PLAY	PLAY	PLAY									
U19				PLAY	PLAY	PLAY						

KICKOFF WINDOWS

For flight planning

U13 & U14	Scottsdale	First: 8:00 AM · Last (travel day): 6:30 PM
U15 – U19	Mesa	First: 8:00 AM · Last (travel day): 8:45 PM

HOTEL & TRAVEL

Hotel accommodations are booked through the official travel partner, On Location (866-939-4625) — it guarantees the lowest flexible rate and free cancellations/changes. On Location can also help with flights, ground transportation, and group logistics.

Each team's team manager is coordinating hotel and travel booking with their group — reach out to your team manager with questions before booking.

CONDUCT & BANNED TERMS

Read before every match

"MLS NEXT prohibits discriminatory conduct and a red card will be issued to anyone who uses a Banned Term or makes a discriminatory gesture, and they will be suspended from future games. Yellow cards will be issued for unsporting behavior to any player who taunts the opposing team. Respect your opponent and the game, and let your play speak for itself."

— Read by the Match Official before every MLS NEXT Fest match

⚠ MLS NEXT is committed to facilitating a diverse and inclusive environment. Discrimination or offensive remarks of any kind arising out of or in connection with an individual's background, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or identity, in English or any language, will not be tolerated.

EXAMPLES OF BANNED TERMS	
"Sp*c" / "Sp*ck" / "Bean*r" / "Wetb*ck"	"Ch*nk" / "Sl*nt"
"Rag He*d"	"K*ke"
"N*gga" / "N*gger" / "N*gro"	"Monkey" / "Mono" / "Gorilla" / "Gorila"
"Black Boy" / "White Boy" / "Jew Boy"	"Cracker"
"P*to" / "Mar*cón"	"F*g" / "F*ggot" / "Homo" / "B*tty Boy"

As published in the official MLS NEXT Fest Pre-Event Education materials. Not an exhaustive list — any discriminatory remark or gesture is subject to discipline.

If a banned term is used mid-match: player tells the coach/referee → referee stops the match and addresses both coaching staffs → MLS NEXT staff come to the field before play resumes.

TEAM'S 1ST ACT	TEAM'S 2ND ACT
Individual player suspended* AND team receives a written warning.	Individual player suspended* AND team removed from the competition.

*Suspended for at least 3 matches — possibly the rest of the Event, depending on the circumstances. MLS NEXT reserves the right to sanction more severely based on the nature of the conduct.

SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- Cheer positively — respect referee decisions and avoid negative interactions with opposing players, coaches, or spectators.
- Spectators must sit across from their own team's bench.
- Alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are not permitted at venues.

- Spectators are subject to discipline, including removal from the Event, for Code of Conduct violations.

PLAYER EDUCATION

Optional, while you're there

Player Pathway Speaker Series — open to players, coaches & parents, no registration needed:

- Thursday, Dec 10, 1:30–4:30 PM: Holistic View of Player Development (technology, mental performance, state of player development in MLS)
- Friday, Dec 11, 1:30–4:30 PM: The Pathway (MLS Draft/Pathway to Pro, college recruiting, Youth National Team, mentorship)

Free Grassroots Coaching License (U17 & U19 players only) — in partnership with U.S. Soccer, free of charge in Mesa, AZ on December 3rd, 5th & 6th. Interest form due Monday, November 30 at 5:00 PM ET — talk to Coach Daniel if your U17/U19 player wants to sign up.

SCHOOL ABSENCE LETTER

An official letter from the MLS NEXT General Manager supporting excused absences for Fest travel (Dec 2–13) is available for download alongside this guide on the MLS NEXT Fest page of the SC Wave Player Hub — share it with your player's school if games fall during the school week.

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