



U.S. Soccer Development Academy Overview

Everyone agrees – the United States needs to improve as a soccer playing nation. Following a comprehensive review of elite player development in the United States and around the world, U.S. Soccer has created the U.S. Soccer Development Academy to improve the everyday environment for the elite youth player. Using the U-17 National Team Residency program as a model of training and focus, clubs that are chosen to participate in the Academy program will only compete in Academy programming, thus increasing the amount of time that can be spent training and improving the quality of matches. National Team and National Staff coaches will be scouting the Academy matches and trainings to ensure that players are seen in their natural playing environment. U.S. Soccer will also be assigning referees to provide an opportunity for up-and-coming officials to participate in higher level matches. The Development Academy League will start in the fall of 2007.

The Structure (Overview)

Objective:	The focus of the Academy is player development. Academies will provide players with the best possible opportunity to achieve their utmost potential as elite soccer players.
Standards:	Academy teams are required to train at least three days per week and rest one day per week during the Academy Season. Academy teams will play between 30 - 38 games per year.
Teams:	Up to 80 of the top youth soccer clubs in the U.S. will be selected to join the Program.
Selection:	Clubs are invited to submit an Academy Membership Application by August 1, 2007. National Team coaches will review the applications and select the clubs with the best qualifications to become Development Academies.
Age Groups:	Academies will field one team in each of the two Academy Age Groups: Under-16 and Under-18. Each team will have a minimum roster of 22 players. The age cutoff is based on an August 1 birthday. The Academy program is for boys only.
Format:	Academy Clubs will be divided into regions with approximately 15-20 Academies in each region. Each team will play home and away matches against the other teams in their region during the 8-month season. The winner of each region will participate in the Academy Finals at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.

To maintain a focus on training, Development Academy teams will not play in any other leagues, tournaments or State Cup competitions. Additionally, players will only be allowed to compete on their designated Academy team, with only two exceptions: high school soccer and national team duty.

The Advantages

- Focus on superior everyday training environment increases development of player leading to more future opportunities (college, professional, National Team).
- Increased connection of Elite players to U.S. National Team program through enhanced scouting by U.S. Soccer National Team coaches.
- *The U.S. U-16 National Team will participate in the U-18 Academy League competition.*
- Better scouting environment for College, Professional and National Team coaches.
- Better coaching development platform – each club receives two invitations to the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Best Practices seminars (U.S. Soccer pays for room, board and participation fees).
- Better referee development platform – U.S. Soccer assigns referees to Academy matches.
- Direct connection to U.S. Soccer coaches for best practice training and curriculum recommendations and advances.
- Academy finals held annually at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.
- Players receive integrated oversight from youth club coaches and U.S. Soccer coaches, while training in their home environment.
- Recruiting ability enhanced for Youth National Teams, MLS and college coaches, with players being provided an online profile for coaches to access easily.
- U.S. Soccer maintained website devoted to Development Academy.

Academy Operation

U.S. Soccer will operate the Development Academy and integrate its National Teams, Referee, Coaching and Communications resources. There is a \$1 per player fee and a \$25 per coach fee for registration and **no** team or club registration fees associated with becoming a U.S. Soccer Development Academy member. A fully-refundable operating bond of \$2,500 is required. Participation will require significant travel on weekends, depending on a team's proximity to other Academies. Clubs are responsible for participation expenses such as travel, facility use fees, coaching costs, equipment, apparel and other relevant costs.