



U.S. Soccer Development Academy - Introduction

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 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 scout the Academy matches and trainings to ensure that players are seen in their natural playing environment. U.S. Soccer will assign referees to provide an opportunity for up-and-coming officials to participate in higher level matches. The Development Academy League kicks-off Columbus Day Weekend, October 6-8, 2007 at The Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif

The Structure (Overview)

Objective:	The focus of the Academy is player development. Academies 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 play 30 games per year.
Teams:	64 of the top youth soccer clubs in the U.S. participate in the Program.
Selection:	Academy Clubs were selected by U.S. Soccer National Team based on a number of criteria, including a club's history of elite youth player development and past success in elite competitions
Age Groups:	Academies field one team in each of the two Academy Age Groups: Under-16 and Under-18. Each team has a minimum roster of 20 players. The age cutoff is based on a January 1 birthday. The Academy program is for boys only.
Format:	Academy Clubs are divided into eight conferences of eight Academies. Each team plays 30 matches during the 8-month season. The winner of each conference will participate in the Academy Finals at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.

To maintain a focus on training, Development Academy teams do not play in any other leagues, tournaments or State Cup competitions. Additionally, players are only 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 and U-17 National Teams will participate in Academy League competitions.*
- 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 operates the Development Academy and integrates 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 requires 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.