

**U.S. SOCCER DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**





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 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.





Thoughts from National Team and College Coaches

Bob Bradley, U.S. Men's National Team Head Coach

"I'm very excited about the establishment of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy Program. It is very important for U.S. Soccer to work with our top clubs to ensure that our best young players are constantly being challenged in an environment that best promotes player development. With a tremendous amount of reach, this program will help focus training sessions and matches on the areas that are critical to elevating our young players' ability to compete at the elite levels of the sport."

John Hackworth, U.S. Under-17 Men's National Team Head Coach

"It's a concept that youth soccer in this country desperately needs and our goal is to truly shift the focus towards increasing player development. I think it will create a day-to-day training environment that will allow players the opportunity to develop to the best of their ability. Right now we have only 40 players in that type of environment here in Bradenton, but this Academy will allow us to put thousands of elite players in a similar environment, which will help us raise the entire level across the nation. We are also looking forward to our U-16 group playing in the Academy and to scouting the players in their natural environment."

Thomas Rongen, U.S. Under-20 Men's National Team Head Coach

"Providing players with a better situation to develop at these crucial ages will be greatly beneficial to all of the national teams, from the U-20s to the U-23s and eventually the full team. The more players we can expose to the high-level of training and competition that will be provided in the Development Academy, the better for the entire development of the sport in the United States."

Bob Jenkins, U.S. Soccer Director of Coaching Education & Youth Development and U-18 Men's National Team Head Coach

"The Academy is a comprehensive approach to help develop the top players across the nation, but it is also designed to be a working model for the grassroots level. All the clubs involved will be moving in the same direction giving us a similar approach to player development, and then these clubs will act almost like satellites out in the country helping to spread the message out to the clubs around them."

Manny Schellscheidt, U.S. U-14 Development Program Head Coach; Head Men's Soccer Coach Seton Hall University

"At this level, we shouldn't be so concerned about the results, but rather the players' performance. We want kids to love the game, enjoy getting better and get more comfortable with the game. The Development Academy puts our emphasis on players' development not on trying to create the most winning team. It's all about the basics that we so often skip in favor of the quick result. Playing well is the key, and, eventually, if you know how to play the results will come."

Sasho Cirovski, Head Men's Soccer Coach, University of Maryland; Chair, NSCAA Division I Coaches

"For the good of the game, this is a welcome and long overdue concept. Youth soccer has become obsessed with winning and learning through games at the expense of development of fundamental techniques. The emphasis on training, combined with a periodization schedule that will allow players to train and play games mentally and physically at 100 percent, is exciting. College coaches will be able to evaluate players in a consistent high quality competitive environment. In the long run, I believe that this will make our recruiting less costly and more efficient. This is something that all of us in college soccer welcome with open arms."





U.S. Soccer Development Academy – Technical Framework

Item	Academy Standard	Rationale
Age Brackets	U-18; U-16 Birthyear – U-18 = August 1, 1989 U-16 = August 1, 1991	There are three core dynamics with this issue: 1) Ensures that 17-year old players have a place to continue their development before college/pros. 2) Ensures the proper physical match-ups to allow players to develop (15 year old players v. 17 year old players). 3) Remains consistent with our National Team programming at the youngest level and not burning out 13 year old players. These specific age groups meet all three objectives. It is also critical that the activity levels of young players be limited to avoid burn-out. Adopting an Academy-like schedule for younger players is an appropriate level of activity at the 12-13 age group.
Age Group Determination	August	August deadline aligns with the rest of the youth system to ease the transition of players into the Academy system.
Roster Size	Minimum of 22 players; up to six “developmental” slots on a game roster; Initial roster submitted 21 days prior to first match	22 allows for the Academy team to train in an 11 v. 11 situation. Clubs may have more than 22 players based on their individual judgment. Developmental players will be allowed to transfer up age groups within the Academy program and will not be subject to minimum start requirements.
Roster Changes	Up to four changes from within the Club; Roster changes made on March 1 of the season; New roster players must be from within the Club.	Allows for Clubs to “promote” players and replace players who may want to leave the Academy system.
Travel Party	18 players	Allows entire travel party to be eligible to participate.
Minimum Playing Time	Each player must start a minimum of 30% of the games	This accomplishes two things: 1) Ensures coaches are looking at the development component for players. 2) Allows each player to gain meaningful experience and playing time.
Substitutions	Maximum of seven; No-re-entry	Allows entire travel party to be eligible to participate; no re-entry ensures that the coach is looking at managing the entire game and not segments of the game through multiple re-entries in a single game.
Game Length	U-18 = 2 x 45 minutes U-16 = 2 x 40 minutes	This is consistent with U.S. Soccer’s Best Practices.
Training/Game Ratios	Minimum of three trainings and one day of rest per week.	Ensures proper levels of activity for Academy players.
Participation in outside activity	Permitted in designated windows with certain parameters – International travel or Events with a maximum of one game per day.	Designated windows allow for meaningful competition, especially international events. Designated windows are Nike Friendlies, Christmas/New Years week, Easter and the end of the Season (week) to September 1.





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SECTION I. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

A. Application Instructions

Please complete Section II (Club Information) and Section III (Player Development History) of the Membership Application and fax them to 312-808-1301 or email them to cduke@ussoccer.org by August 1, 2007. Also, please review Section IV (Academy Requirements) of the Membership Application to ensure your club will be able and willing to adhere to all of the Academy requirements.

If you have any questions, please call Chris Duke at 312-528-1296.

B. Application Timeline

August 1, 2007 – Last Day to Submit Applications

August 10, 2007 – Final Day to Receive Notice on Application Decision

September 1, 2007 – Last Day to Return Membership Agreement and Performance Bond

Fall 2007 – Start of Academy Program

C. Review Process

U.S. Soccer's National Team and National Staff Coaches will evaluate the applications using the following objective and subjective measures:

1. National Team Coach Analysis
2. History of Elite Youth Player Development
3. History of Success in Elite Competitions

U.S. Soccer will notify your Club Contact about the Committee's decision by August 10, 2007.

*Please note the following change to the original application:

Based on further discussions with interested clubs, a rolling admissions process has been adopted to provide clubs with the best opportunity to schedule their upcoming calendar.

D. Club Admittance

Upon acceptance as a U.S. Soccer Development Academy, your Club Contact will receive an email with a detailed Operating Guide and Membership Agreement Form. Your Club Contact must return the Membership Agreement Form and Performance Bond by September 1, 2007 or your club will forfeit its spot in the Academy System.

E. Future Consideration

U.S. Soccer will review future membership applications if your club is not accepted as a Development Academy for the 2007/2008 Season.





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SECTION II. CLUB INFORMATION

A. General Club Information

Please provide general information about your club.

Club Name: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip +4: _____

Website: _____

Year Founded: _____

Nearest Major Airport(s): _____

B. Team Information

While the Academy Program is currently only for the boys side of the game, please provide information on your entire club.

of Boys Teams in each age group: _____

of Girls Teams in each age group: _____

Total # of Boys Players: _____

Total # of Girls Players: _____

Total # of Coaches: _____

Typical Player's High School Season (i.e. Sept–Nov): _____

C. Facility Information

Please provide information on your club's facilities.

of Fields/Type of Surface: _____

of Owned Fields: _____

of Rented Fields: _____

Club House On-Site (Yes or No): _____

Access to Weight Room: _____



D. Club Contact Information

Please provide the information for the club's point of contact (i.e. President, Executive Director, etc.)

Club Contact: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip +4: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Telephone 2: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

E. U-16 Academy Team Coach

Please provide basic information on your U-16 Academy Team Coach.

U-16 Academy Team Coach: _____

Coaching Licenses Held: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip +4: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Telephone 2: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

F. U-18 Academy Team Coach

Please provide basic information on your U-18 Academy Team Coach.

U-18 Academy Team Coach: _____

Coaching Licenses Held: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip +4: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Telephone 2: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____





SECTION III. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

A. History of Development: National Team Players – Men’s Side

Please list any Youth and Full National Team Players that have played at your club including the years they participated on your club’s teams:

	First Name	Last Name	Years of Participation at Club
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

Please include any additional players on a separate sheet of paper.

Please indicate if any of the listed players have participated on a different country’s National Team.



B. History of Development: Other Notable Players – Men’s Side

Please list other notable players to have played for your club. Please list the years in which they played for your club’s teams and the highest level they played upon leaving your club (i.e. MLS – Chicago, Division I – Duke, etc.).

	First Name	Last Name	Years of Participation at Club	Highest Level Played (list team)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

Please include any additional players on a separate sheet of paper.





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SECTION IV. REQUIREMENTS

A. Requirements

The following criteria are the minimum requirements expected of all U.S. Soccer Development Academies.

1. Team Participation in Unapproved Competitions

During the Academy Season, teams are only permitted to participate in the Academy League matches and elite tournaments held during the following windows:

- Winter Windows: Nike Friendlies, Christmas/New Years Week
- Spring Window: Easter Week (In 2008 - March 19 to March 26)
- Summer Window: End of Season (July) to September 1

Please note that Elite events may only have one game per day.

Academy Team or player participation in competitions such as State Cup, Super Y-League and U.S. Club Soccer is not permitted.

2. Player Participation in Unapproved Competitions

Development Academy players are not permitted to participate on any teams other than their Academy Team during the Academy Season. Participation on other club teams, other age groups within the club, ODP, Regional ODP and any other teams is not permitted. The only two exceptions are National Team duty and the players' High School teams.

3. Training Days

Each team will be expected to hold at least three training sessions per week during the Academy Season.

4. Rest Day

Each team is expected to provide at least one day of rest per week during the Academy season.

5. Age Groups

Development Academies will be required to field teams in both of the Academy's age groups: U-16 and U-18.

6. Marketing Guidelines

Each Academy Team will be expected to follow the Marketing Guidelines set forth by U.S. Soccer. Your apparel sponsor (if any) will not influence selection into the Academy program.

7. Use of Official Development Academy Match Ball

All Academy Matches are to be played with the Academy Match Ball.

8. Performance Bond

If accepted, each Academy Team is required to provide a \$2,500 performance bond. The performance bond will be refunded at the end of each season minus any team infractions (as outlined in the Academy Guide) and given the club completes their entire Academy Season.

9. Completion of Academy Season

All Academy teams are required to participate in the entire Academy Season. Should a team fail to complete their schedule, they will sacrifice their performance bond and lose their standing as a Development Academy.

The Academy Season will require extensive travel, including air travel during the League's eight-month season.

