

TOP STORYLINES: GIRLS' DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY LAUNCH

U.S. SOCCER WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM INVOLVEMENT

Several current and former members of the Women's National Team are involved with the Girls' Development Academy either with Academy clubs or in its administration.

Brandi Chastain - WNT legend is the executive director for California Thorns FC (Santa Clara, Calif.), head coach for the club's U-19 team.

Tobin Heath - Current WNT player will work with her club's academy, serving as the Assistant Youth Technical Director for Portland Thorns FC Academy.

Lori Lindsey - The former Washington Spirit midfielder returns to her club home, will serve as the Spirit's Virginia academy Strength and Conditioning Director and as an assistant coach.

Jen Lalor - One of nine Technical Advisors that will support the Development Academy Clubs. Acts as a liaison between the Southwest region's Clubs and the Youth National Teams, Academy administration and Talent Identification Network for U.S. Soccer.

Justi Baumgardt - Will coach U-15 and U-16/U-17 age groups at Crossfire Premier (Redmond, Wash.). She has been with the club since 2008.

NWSL: ROOTS FOR SUSTAINED SUCCESS

The launch of the Girls' DA, featuring 12 clubs affiliated with NWSL teams, marks another step forward for the league and the growth of women's soccer in the United States. In the midst of its fifth season, the NWSL is already the longest-tenured women's professional league ever in the U.S. With the launch of the Girls' DA, the league establishes roots for sustained success and long-term development.

Boston Breakers Academy (Boston Breakers)

California Thorns (Portland Thorns)

FC Kansas City (FC Kansas City)

Houston Dash Youth (Houston Dash)

NC Courage Youth (NC Courage)

Orlando Pride (Orlando Pride)

Portland Thorns (Portland Thorns)

Reign Academy (Seattle Reign FC)

Sky Blue - NYSC (Sky Blue FC)

Sky Blue - PDA (Sky Blue FC)

Washington Spirit Academy - Baltimore Armour (Washington Spirit)

Washington Spirit Academy - Virginia (Washington Spirit)

The launch of the Girls' Academy creates a pipeline for NWSL teams to cultivate talent from age 14 all the way up the pyramid to the first team. The Girls' Academy presents a tremendous opportunity for female youth players to reach their full potential with a clear pathway to the professional ranks. Women's soccer has never had a stronger foothold in the United States and the Girls' Academy's relationship with the NWSL ensures that it will continue to grow.

MLS: INVESTING IN PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Four clubs from Major League Soccer have also created Girls' programs and will join the Academy for the 2017-2018 season: New York City FC, LAFC (LAFC Slammers), San Jose Earthquakes and LA Galaxy.

New York City FC will play out of Youth Affiliate World Class FC's Orangeburg location and opposite the Club's, under-construction, City Football Academy elite training facility.

LA Galaxy set out to create a world-class environment for its elite female youth players by investing \$1 million to renovate its official training fields for the club's Girls' Academy at StubHub Center. The LA Galaxy Girls' Academy will also have access to the same StubHub Center training facilities, locker rooms and strength areas as the LA Galaxy (MLS), LA Galaxy II (USL) and Boy's Development Academy program.

Partnering with Southern California-based Slammers FC, the club that produced current USWNT forward Christen Press, LAFC has committed to developing youth in pursuit of future world-class players and people.

The San Jose Earthquakes will compete in the Northwest Division and strive to give girls in the Bay Area an opportunity to advance their game to the next level based on their long-term commitment to youth development.

SUCCESS OF BOYS' ACADEMY

The creation of the Girls' Academy comes in the wake of the rousing success of the Boys' program. Now entering its tenth year, Boys' Academy players accounted for 92 percent of Youth National Team players during the 2016-17 cycle. The number of Academy teams has exploded, from 125 in 2007 to 461 for last season's campaign.

The Development Academy was created with the goal of providing a pathway for players to develop, and as a pathway for the top players to be identified and progress through the National Team system. Not only are the vast majority of current YNT players drawn from the Academy, but these players are finding success at the international level. Despite missing several top age group players, the U-20 Men's National Team won its group and made a run to the quarterfinals of this summer's U-20 World Cup on the depth of quality Academy products. The U-18 team went undefeated in 2016 and the U-17s are primed for the upcoming U-17 World Cup in India. Nine players named to this summer's Gold Cup roster also had Academy

ties. With the Development Academy as a proven entity, the new Girls' program will look to produce similar results.

NINE FEMALE TECHNICAL ADVISORS SUPPORTING 69 CLUBS

Club support is a critical component to player and club development. The Academy is committed to providing support, resources and education to develop players. Specifically, U.S. Soccer coaching education, scholarship funding, Academy staff and Technical Advisors are dedicated to support clubs to create the ideal everyday Club environment for players. For the 2017-2018 Girls' Academy season, a total of nine Technical Advisors have been [appointed](#) to manage the regions of the country:

1. Morgan Church (Southeast Division)
2. Katie Cole (Frontier Division)
3. Diane Drake (Atlantic Division)
4. Marguerite Ferrell - (Northeast Division)
5. Jen Lalor (Southwest Division)
6. Marieke Laurens-van Tienhoven (Southwest Division)
7. Zahra Lechak (Northwest Division)
8. Megan McCormick - (Northwest Division)
9. Vicki Linton - (Mid-America Division)

In supporting the clubs, the nine TA's will work to manage the talent identification networks in their regions, which consist of the U.S. Soccer scouting network who attend training, games, and Academy showcases to identify the next generation of elite players. As the next step in the development pathway, they will provide scouting reports and player-specific data to the Director of Talent Identification and Youth National Team Staff.