

FC United Girls Development Academy

Frequently Asked Questions



DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
MEMBER

What is the Development Academy (DA)?

U.S. Soccer started the Development Academy Program to improve long-term player and coach development. After studying player development models domestically and internationally, U.S. Soccer collaborated with elite soccer clubs across the U.S to create a program to provide the proper environment by emphasizing quality training and meaningful elite competition. The Academy is the top program for girls' soccer in the country and serves as the primary pathway to the Youth National Teams.

What are some of the benefits of playing in the Girls' Development Academy?

The Academy's elite training environment promotes increased technical standards and allows for greater accountability for players and coaches. Coaches can devote more time to these areas in training. Players must learn to deal with and manage the challenges of playing in games using international rules, which they will experience at the highest levels. The Academy program provides an improved environment with the proper training-to-game ratio that supports year round periodization for development.

How does playing in the Girls' Development Academy help a player accelerate their development?

By participating in the Academy, a player will have substantially more hours on the training field, focused on refining technique and tactical understanding. With a minimum of four training sessions per week, there is significant opportunity to work on technique and receive instruction from coaches and U.S. Soccer Technical Advisors, as part of a continuous seasonal plan for the players' development.

How many clubs are in the Girls' Development Academy?

There are 71 clubs in the Girls' Development Academy.

What are the standards of the league and program?

League standards for the DA include:

- Selective entry - only 71 clubs accepted into the league
- Coaching standards - only USSF Licensed coaches will be in the program
- Minimum training expectations – Minimum 4 training sessions a week, minimum half an 11v11 field to train
- Training to game ratio of 4:1 - More training sessions, and less games but higher quality to increase level of play
- International rules and standards - limited subbing to mimic the highest levels
- More financial help from the league - covering league fees to help clubs drop costs for players
- All games will be recorded and analyzed with players. Players will get use of video analysis technology and software to better aid development
- Medical staff available at all games

What other things will the FC United Girls DA program offer?

We will offer a futsal component to our Winter training, where players will train to continue to improve technical skills in small spaces. We will also include a sports performance component and video analysis for individual player and team development.

What is the player selection process?

The DA program does not have “tryouts” as we have had in our club for other programs. Our coaching staff will host ID sessions throughout the Spring to identify and evaluate players. Our staff will continue to scout, identify, and evaluate all prospective players at team training sessions, games and other events this Spring. We will offer positions to players beginning this Spring, with the goal of finalizing all DA rosters before the rest of our club tryouts in May.

What is a Developmental Player?

A Developmental player is a player within the club on other teams (not the DA program) and can train anytime with the DA program and play in games to gain experience. Ideally this is a player that our staff feels isn't quite ready to play at the DA level but needs the extra quality-training environment, or someone that develops throughout the year that we can move into the DA environment.

How will the DA impact high school soccer and other sports/activities?

DA players will not be allowed to participate in high school soccer. Other activities/sports will be allowed as long as they work around our DA training and game schedule as a priority. We urge our players to be active members in other activities, the community, and to excel in the classroom.

How will the DA impact FC United Girl's current club teams in MRL and National League?

This new program will have a very positive impact on our other programming. Our current teams will maintain their current places in respective leagues and allow us to offer top-level play and training to even more players.

How will the DA affect ODP and Super Y?

Any players in a Development Academy season are not allowed to participate in other soccer programs. Development Academy registered players wouldn't be able to attend ODP, or Super Y Finals in December. In the month of July players are free to do what they would like to, but we recommend DA players use this month to rest before the heavy season starts again.

What will travel look like?

All Academy travel will be team based and schedule through the FC United DA Administrative Staff. FCUDA is not responsible for any travel expenses, including any fees due to travel changes.

Number of players on the roster?

There will be 16 – 23 players on the roster, with no more than 18 traveling to an event.

We are very excited for this program and look forward to it further enhancing our position as the elite club in the Chicagoland Area. If you have further questions please contact our Academy Director, John Soltani, at soltani.john@gmail.com.