



Contact: Elizabeth Flannery
Washington Youth Soccer
253-476-2237 (phone)
elizabeth@wsysa.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Seattle Sounders FC and Washington Youth Soccer Join to Advance Youth Soccer Development Programs in Washington State

FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON (Thursday, July 30) – Seattle Sounders FC and Washington Youth Soccer have partnered to enhance and expand the youth soccer development system in Washington State. The partnership between Seattle Sounders FC and Washington Youth Soccer on youth development programs will create a system that provides additional levels and avenues to elite play.

Historically, the Olympic Development Program (ODP) has served as the top identification and development program for youth players in the United States aspiring to attain state, regional and national team status. With the recent launch of the U.S. Soccer Federation Development Academy, new regional leagues, and alternative recruiting programs, there are now additional avenues to collegiate, professional and National team levels.

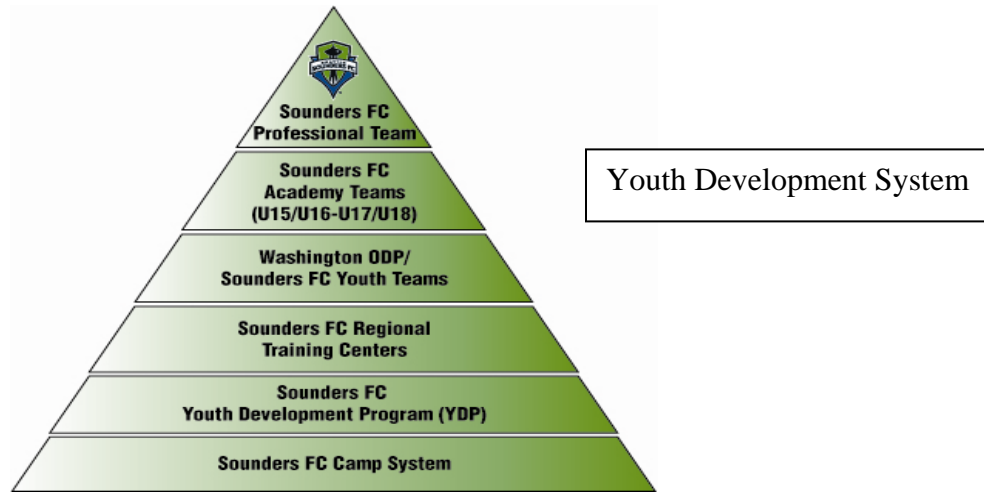
The new system will unite the very best avenues to high level soccer through a Regional Training Center (RTC) model that will bring the top players in the state together once a week to train under elite coaches. The RTC system, launching in September 2009, will include 5 locations across the state and will incorporate the top youth clubs in Washington State and upper age group Academy teams. The RTC program is designed to identify the very best players in Washington state across all leagues, affiliations and geographic locations. Therefore, the identification process will be open and comprehensive with the only criteria for invitation being based on player ability.

At the RTCs, players will train, develop and be evaluated with the ultimate goal of creating a state pool of players for each designated age group. The pool for each age group will become the ODP/Sounders FC youth team pool – the top players from these pools will travel as the ODP/Sounders FC youth teams to competitions commensurate with ability level. There will also be an open tryout for the traveling teams to ensure that all players have the opportunity to be considered for the program.

Starting in the spring of 2010, the Sounders FC will form teams to apply to the U.S. Soccer Federation Academy League; joining the other MLS youth teams already participating in this league and creating a stepping stone into the next echelon of play for the state's elite youth players. Per the MLS Youth Initiative, players may be signed to a professional contract out of this program for the full professional team for Sounders FC. The U15/U16 and U17/U18 boys

academy teams and the girls' older Washington State ODP teams will serve as the top teams for this program.

“With the launch of Sounders FC, a relationship was constructed between the new professional soccer team and Washington Youth Soccer, which has led to this advanced youth soccer development program” said Doug Andreassen, President Washington Youth Soccer. “The new RTC model provides an enhanced mechanism for identifying the top players in the state, developing them to their highest level and ultimately providing them with even more opportunities for advanced levels of play.”



Additional information on this program can be found at www.wsysa.com. For press inquiries on this program and other Washington Youth Soccer news, contact Elizabeth Flannery at elizabeth@wsysa.com or 253.476.2237 x112.

About Washington Youth Soccer

Washington Youth Soccer is the largest youth soccer organization in Washington. Washington Youth Soccer is the state's affiliate for US Youth Soccer, which is the largest sports organization in the United States and the most populous member of the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body for soccer in the United States. The Washington Youth Soccer is the sixth largest membership in the nation; our organization represents over 128,000 players (ages 4-19) and their families, 15,000 coaches on 12,000 teams and 6,500 referees in the state of Washington. Washington Youth Soccer's mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of the State of Washington's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition.

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