



Press Release

For Immediate Release: Monday, June 29, 2020

Announcement: Launch of Elite Academy League (EA LEAGUE)

San Diego, June 29, 2020 -The Elite Academy League is announcing its launch today. Created in the Western US Region and playing inside USYS and Cal South, the new league is representing the Southwest Division and each club's total player pool, serving as a supplemental league to the "MLS Elite" Clubs. Committed to developing top players across the platform, the league is built off the former DA standards and now the "MLS Elite", keeping the prestige and top tier program that the former USSDA represented for the past decade. This league was developed to address the needs of the member clubs, primarily assisting with developing top players inside the Elite Club's player pools.

The Elite Academy League is composed of member clubs primarily from the new "MLS Elite" Academy and other top competitive clubs; recommended by the conferences, and admitted by the Elite Academy League Technical Group. Albion SC, City SC, LAUFA, TFA, CVFC, Surf Murrieta, Laguna United, Liverpool, Santa Monica Surf, and Santa Barbara SC will be participating in the 2020-2021 season.. These clubs will be participating with boys teams U11-U19. The U11 and U12 age groups inside the Elite Academy League will be the top teams in their respected clubs and will be considered pre "MLS Elite" League teams and will be preparing to move into the league at U13. Currently, there are discussions around formation of a girls side within the Elite Academy League for these Elite Academy Clubs that are not part of the GA/DPL model.

This new league allows the member clubs of the "MLS Elite," to work together to promote the highest standards in competitive soccer, and integrate both leagues with this common goal and direction. Unifying clubs from within the conferences helps maintain the defining standards of the former USSDA, along with the new, enhanced standards of "MLS Elite." This integration further presents long needed flexibility in two key areas; (1) permission for all players to participate in High School Soccer and, (2) revising the substitution rules to encourage clubs to better utilize their player pools, especially when showcasing their players to pro scouts and college coaches.

"We are proud to be a founding member of the Elite Academy League, which will finally enable our clubs to develop our total player pool in a progressive way. The clubs associated with the new league will work closely to develop a streamlined approach to player development between the teams playing in both the EA League and "MLS Elite" League. **Noah Gins, ALBION SC**

"The vision of the Elite Academy league and how it emphasizes vertical integration is a huge piece. I am happy that Santa Monica Surf will work with tremendous partners elevating our level of play and setting us up for future success. We look forward to being a great constituent of the league and participating in the high-level competition on a consistent basis. " **Arron Craggs, SM Surf**

“Laguna United FC is excited about this great opportunity to be part of the Elite Academy League. The league's vision and structure provides a clear developmental pathway for player and team progression that will greatly benefit our club and community. The platform of the league provides top youth clubs the opportunity to compete at a high level with meaningful games.” **Sam Nicholson, Laguna United**

“I am thrilled about the opportunity the gifted players in the region will have to participate in this unique league. We are also delighted with the clubs that will be involved. You truly cannot find a league with a better group of clubs in the country. Our club has been looking forward to the new developing landscape in American soccer, and we are positioned to lead our region in it.” **Hector Diaz, CVFC**

“As a Founding Member we are excited to be a part of this new and cutting edge league. We now have another professionally structured league that we can provide to other deserving teams throughout our club. Looking forward to working closely with the other Founding Members as we embark on our first year together.” **Paul Walker, TFA**

"Liverpool Football Club International Academy SoCal, are very excited to be a founding member, and looking forward to the launch of the Elite Academy League. With good football people coming together to collaborate and innovate and with elite clubs involved that know the standards required to enhance development. I have no doubt the future is bright for us in this league as it is committed to being the top player development league in the United States. **Paul Holohan, Liverpool International So Cal**

“City SC are delighted to be a part of the new Elite Academy League. This new platform allows clubs to mirror the programming and standards driven by the new MLS Academy league. The EAL provides a solid structure to support our players with collegiate soccer aspirations and expands the academy experience and opportunities beyond just the first team at each age group.” **Paul Ritchie, City SC**

“We are extremely excited to be a founding member & compete in the Boys Elite Academy League. This league will raise the level of competition for all of our boys teams at Murrieta Surf.” **Matt Hocking, Murrieta Surf**

“Santa Barbara SC is deeply committed to developing elite level players and is excited about the new Elite Academy League. We are honored to be affiliated with a platform that collaborates with top clubs throughout the country and aligns with our clubs core values.”

Christy Gates-Bowes, Santa Barbara SC

“LAUFA is appreciative to be a founding member of the Elite Academy League. LAUFA perceives this league as an extended opportunity to contribute to LAUFA'S development pathway with meaningful competition.” **Martin Vasquez, LAUFA**

The Elite Academy League will start in September 2020.

For more information, visit www.eliteacademyleague.com

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