



Frequently Asked Questions 2009-2010 Development Academy

The Colorado Rapids U16 and U18 Development Academy teams were formed in accordance with Major League Soccer's 2007 Homegrown Player Initiative. In 2008, the teams were accepted as charter members of US Soccer's Development Academy, formed to raise the training and competition standards within the top clubs in the US.

Our goal is to create a program for each player that will allow him to reach his full potential, whatever that may be. For the majority of our players college soccer will be the pinnacle of their careers, but a select few will have the ability to play beyond that level. Major League Soccer now allows clubs to create a clear path from amateur soccer to the professional league while retaining the rights to the players that they help develop. The Academy's top players in each age group will be identified as Homegrown Players after spending 12 months in the program. A Homegrown Player who is talented enough to play in MLS will now have the ability to sign a Generation Adidas contract for his hometown club and not be placed in the MLS SuperDraft.

How are the Rapids Development Academy teams different?

The Rapids are the only club in Colorado that possesses the ultimate end product, the professional team. Players are trained by coaches who also work with professionals. Throughout the year select groups of players even have access to train with the pros themselves. Training and games take place at Dick's Sporting Goods Park, the top soccer complex in the region. The locker rooms, media rooms and training rooms are all found on site. All of this, combined with MLS specific competitions, come together to create the best possible environment for player development.

Who is eligible for the 2009-2010 teams?

For the U18 team, any player born on or after January 1, 1991
For the U16 team, any player born on or after January 1, 1993

How are players selected for the Rapids Development Academy teams?

Evaluating players for the DA teams is a year long process. We scout league games, host local and regional evaluation sessions, watch high school games and bring players in to train with our current teams. The process concludes with a final tryout in July. Initial rosters will be set by the 1st of August, but we may add players at anytime during the year. The current tryout information is posted on our website, www.coloradorapids.com/academy

When and where do the teams train?

Full-time training for the Development Academy teams will begin on November 7. Our teams train Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings at Dick's Sporting Goods Park. We generally train or play on both Saturdays and Sundays, giving us 5 contact days in most weeks.

We have access to two artificial fields at DSG Park which serve as our winter training home; therefore we train outside year round.

What is the schedule like?

For 2008-09 the Development Academy schedule for Colorado teams will begin on November 15. League games continue through the end of June. The schedule includes three Showcases – December 6-7, May 22-25 and June 26-29 (playoff participants only). The rest of the schedule consists of home and away games within our region (Chicago Fire, Chicago Magic, Chicago Sockers, FC Milwaukee, Metro United, Scott Gallagher, Colorado Rush and Real Colorado) and crossover games with North and South Texas teams.

Since most games are scheduled as double weekends, the schedule will present us with trips to Chicago twice, St. Louis, Dallas, Houston and the 3 Showcases.

In addition to the Development Academy schedule, the Rapids participate in an MLS only competition each summer.

There is extensive travel involved with this league, how is that handled?

Each away game requires us to fly. On most trips charter busses are used for ground transportation. Players are roomed 3-4 to a room.

Most trips are staffed with our coaches, a team administrator from within our organization and an athletic trainer (when available).

In an effort to minimize missed school days, we try to travel after 5:00 pm on Fridays and return on Sunday evenings. Last year we had one trip that required missed school from our metro area players. Due to a change in the showcase schedule we anticipate the possibility of missing an additional 2-3 days of school in future years.

What will the program cost?

The Rapids Academy provides registration fees, coaching fees and staff travel, field rental and uniforms for Development Academy players. As of today, players are responsible for their actual travel costs as well as our college preparation program.

In 2007-08 the total travel cost, minus food, for a player who participated in all 8 trips came to \$3884. For 2008-09 the costs will be very similar. We will invoice each trip individually.

A limited amount of need-based financial assistance is available through the club. Financial assistance forms can be found on the Development Academy page of our website.

Do you help with the college search process?

The majority of our players will go on to play college soccer at a school and a level that suits their academic and athletic talents.

We feel it is important to start the college search process early and with all the information you need to find the right college fit. The Sport Source provides educational sessions for our players beginning with the U14 teams. These sessions are age group/grade level specific and are made available to all of our high school age groups.

Our staff is also in constant contact with college coaches. We are in the unique position of not only sending players off to college, but we are also monitoring players for summer training programs and the MLS SuperDraft. The relationships built with college coaches through this process ultimately benefit all of the players in our program.

What about high school soccer?

Both US Soccer and the Colorado Rapids currently allow Development Academy players to play high school soccer.

I have an interest in participating, how can I get evaluated for the Development Academy teams or get more information on the program?

Interested players should fill out the online interest form found on our website or contact the Academy directly at rapidsacademy@dsgpark.com or 303-727-3575.