



April 29, 2021

FC Cincinnati introduce “Soccer in the Community” initiative

Club extends its youth development pyramid, expanding grassroots-style programming

CINCINNATI – FC Cincinnati and the FC Cincinnati Academy have launched the “Soccer in the Community” initiative, the organization’s latest extension of the club’s youth development platform. The initiative – comprised of the FC Cincinnati Youth Affiliate and Club Partner programs, and FC Cincinnati Foundation’s Soccer Unites and West End Pride programs – will deliver FC Cincinnati core training and development principals throughout the Midwest region, expanding the education and recruitment reach of the FC Cincinnati Academy.

The “Soccer in the Community” initiative is meant to be inclusive of the local youth soccer landscape while increasing the level of soccer in the region. The initiative will reach both boys and girls, at various levels of soccer experience, will be inclusive of those with special needs and will have Spanish speakers involved in camps. The initiative will continue to develop over the next eighteen months to provide opportunities to even more young players.

Spring 2021 – Launch of FC Cincinnati Youth Affiliate and Club Partner Programs

Summer 2021 – Launch of FC Cincinnati Foundation’s Soccer Unites Summer Camp & After-School Program

Spring 2022 – Introduction of Camps & Clinics; Launch of Recreational level programs

FC Cincinnati Youth Affiliate Program

The FC Cincinnati Youth Affiliate and Club Partner Programs will engage boys and girls youth soccer clubs to expand their educational resources and development opportunities to support the region’s players and their coaches.

By doing so, FC Cincinnati’s technical philosophy will serve as the region’s soccer development benchmark and help elevate and unify the level of play in the region. The three program fundamentals will include culture, education and the pathway development model.

“The Affiliate Program really is the foundation of the FC Cincinnati development pyramid that starts with youth players and goes all the way up through the first team,” FCC director of player development Larry Sunderland said. “To be able to impact a wide swath of players in our region and instill the FCC way of playing at a young age, we help the players develop in a more concentrated model. That helps us funnel players already familiar with our FCC family and club philosophies into the FC Cincinnati Academy, and then – potentially – the first team in later years. This is really the first step to becoming an elite-level player, and potentially, a Homegrown Player for FC Cincinnati down the line.”

“The Affiliate Program is very important in our development model,” FCC general manager Gerard Nijkamp said. “The top football playing countries start the players very young with clubs, and this is a way to do so in the States and have a similar impact in the players’ development and growth. The longer we are able to have players in our development system, the more impact we can have on their progression as players. We know that future Homegrown Players are at the youth clubs in the region now, and we are looking forward to bringing them into the FC Cincinnati family and helping raise the overall bar of talent in the Cincinnati area.”

Through their partnership with FC Cincinnati, youth clubs enrolled as Affiliates – as well as their players – will receive increased quantity and quality of development and training assets to help raise their standard of play.

Official Affiliate clubs will receive a host of technical benefits, including:

- Coaching instruction and resources from FC Cincinnati
- Increased interaction and educational opportunities with the FC Cincinnati Academy coaches and staff

- Player scouting and recruiting by the FCC Academy via the Discovery Program
- National coaching education opportunities (limited availability)
- Pre-sale registration space for FCC camps and clinics starting in 2022

Additionally, clubs will also receive:

- FCC Youth Affiliate patch
- FCC Youth Affiliate kit sponsorship kick back
- Preferred pricing on team-related merchandise
- Exclusive ticket discounts
- Match day marketing opportunities
- Access to special events.

FC Cincinnati Club Partner Program

The Club Partner Program is available to all local select youth soccer teams with low barriers to entry. Similar to the Youth Affiliate program, clubs will receive educational resources and development opportunities to elevate and unify the level of play in the region.

“We have built out Soccer in the Community initiative based on the club’s overall goals of being inclusive and involved in the community,” Vice President of Community Relations and FCC Foundation Executive Director Kate Solomon said. “We believe the initiative will improve the level of soccer in the region and the Club Partner Program allows us the opportunity to do so in an inclusive manner. This mindset of having a low barrier option to participate will continue as we build out additional programs within our Soccer in the Community initiative.”

Technical Benefits:

- Virtual Club review
- Academy match observation
- Academy training observation (by appointment only)
- Talent identification
- Invitation to participate in FCC camps 2022
- Potential Invitation to participate in FCC clinics

Commercial Benefits:

- External marketing from FCC for Youth Club Partners as a whole
- Placement on FCC Youth Club Partners webpage
- Club jersey try-on days in TQL Stadium
- Merchandise discounts
- Exclusive ticket discounts
- In-match marketing opportunities
- Special event access

More information on the FC Cincinnati Youth Affiliate and Club Partner Programs is available at <https://www.fccincinnati.com/content/affiliate-program> & <https://www.fccincinnati.com/content/club-partner-program>

Soccer Unites

Soccer Unites is an in-school and after-school soccer program that introduces the game of soccer to those who may not otherwise be exposed. The programming is led by retired player and Club Ambassador Omar Cummings during gym class takeovers. For the after-school program, FC Cincinnati Foundation will provide training, a curriculum, and equipment to partner organizations to lead soccer session at their locations.

West End Pride

West End Pride brings SAY soccer to the West End neighborhood. Fully funded by FC Cincinnati Foundation and run by volunteer coaches, the program has over 170 players across nine teams for Spring 2021.

More information about the FC Cincinnati Academy is available at fccincinnati.com/academy or on the Academy's social networks at @FCCincyAcademy on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



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