

# CHALLENGE SOCCER CLUB: ECNL Program

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**OFFICIAL MEMBER**

# Why Challenge and the ECNL?

## Elite Clubs National League

- ▶ **Level of Stability**
  - ▶ 85% of league returns with 13 new elite members
- ▶ **Allows High School Choice**
  - ▶ Families decide what is best
  - ▶ Non-High School program
- ▶ **College Showcases**
  - ▶ Stated Emphasis of ECNL
- ▶ **Substitution Rule**
  - ▶ No re-entry in each half
- ▶ **Mandatory 3 days of training**
  - ▶ Options for 4 days
  - ▶ School work and travel considerations

## US Development Academy

- ▶ **Level of Uncertainty**
  - ▶ Nearly 30 ECNL clubs declined application or membership
- ▶ **No High School Sports Choice (all sports)**
  - ▶ No sport options/choice other than DA soccer
- ▶ **College Showcases**
  - ▶ Deemphasized Focus
- ▶ **Substitution Rule**
  - ▶ No Re-Entry in game
- ▶ **Mandatory 4 days of training**
- ▶ **More Travel and Higher Cost**
  - ▶ CO and MO added to conference with 2 STX and 3 NTX Clubs
  - ▶ Fewer local games with more flights required

# Why Challenge and the ECNL?

## Elite Clubs National League

- ▶ **Player-Centric Model**
  - ▶ Policies allow collaboration between coaches and players
- ▶ **Club Autonomy and Trust**
  - ▶ Club determines best path for their players based on market and local challenges/needs
- ▶ **Allows play in supplemental leagues, games, and showcases**
  - ▶ Providing more opportunity for individual development

## US Development Academy

- ▶ **League-Centric Model**
  - ▶ Mandates created to best form league policies and rules
- ▶ **National Mandates**
  - ▶ Lacks understanding of club markets, needs and challenges
- ▶ **Can only play in USSF approved showcases and games**
  - ▶ Limits opportunity for individual development
  - ▶ Limits potential college exposure opportunities

# What are the ECNL's Core Values?

- ▶ **Innovation: Player-Centered Programming with a constant focus on raising all standards of the game**
- ▶ **Development: Through the daily environment**
  - ▶ Coaching Development and Education, Club Development and Education, Player Development, Referee Development
- ▶ **Opportunity: Through exposure, showcasing and role modeling**
  - ▶ A path to National Teams, a path to college, a path to a career
- ▶ **Respect for Diversity: Through Unique Member Clubs**
  - ▶ Diverse styles, systems and structures; unified vision and philosophy
- ▶ **Excellence: Across the Youth Experience**
  - ▶ The ECNL look, feel, and experience

# 2017/18 Conference Alignment: 10 Total Clubs (\*ECNL only club)

ECNL: Less travel, no flights required and more games

USDA: More travel, flights required, fewer conference games

- ▶ Challenge SC\*
- ▶ Dallas Sting\*
- ▶ Classics Elite\*
- ▶ Tulsa Hurricanes\*
- ▶ Albion Hurricanes\*
- ▶ Solar Chelsea
- ▶ FC Dallas
- ▶ Dallas Texans
- ▶ D'Feeters\*
- ▶ Club TBA\*

# ECNL Clubs that Declined Membership and/or Application to the USDA (partial list)

- ▶ Challenge SC
- ▶ Dallas Sting
- ▶ Tulsa Hurricanes
- ▶ Albion Hurricanes
- ▶ Match Fit Academy (NJ)
- ▶ Heat SC (NV)
- ▶ FC Portland
- ▶ Ohio Premier
- ▶ Ohio Elite
- ▶ GSA (GA)
- ▶ Connecticut FC
- ▶ FSA (CT)
- ▶ Jacksonville Armada (FL)
- ▶ Strikers FC (CA)
- ▶ Minnesota Thunder
- ▶ Mustang SC (CA)
- ▶ De Anza Force (CA)
- ▶ MVLA (CA)
- ▶ McLean SC (VA)
- ▶ Western NY Flash
- ▶ East Meadow (NY)
- ▶ Sereno SC (AZ)
- ▶ St Louis-Scott Gallagher (MO)
- ▶ St Louis-Scott Gallagher (IL)
- ▶ Richmond United
- ▶ CASL (NC)
- ▶ Albertson SC (NY)
- ▶ FC Bucks (PA)
- ▶ Arsenal FC (CA)
- ▶ D'Feeters

# A Stronger Future for the ECNL: 79 Members Focused on the Development of Elite Players

- ▶ **85%** of ECNL members return for 2017/18 with only 13 declining membership renewal
- ▶ **13 New Members** with National Success
  - ▶ 5 USYS/US Club National Champions, 8 USYS/ US Club National Finalists
  - ▶ 10 USYS National League Teams, 5 Regional Champions
  - ▶ Numerous US National Pool Players and College Commits
- ▶ **8 National Conferences**
  - ▶ Texas Conference
  - ▶ Southwest Conference
  - ▶ Northwest Conference
  - ▶ Midwest Conference
  - ▶ Southeast Conference
  - ▶ Mid-Atlantic Conference
  - ▶ Ohio Valley Conference
  - ▶ Northeast Conference

# What are Challenge's Core Values? #challengefamily

## 30 Years of focus on Female Soccer Players

- ▶ **DEVELOPMENT** of the total female soccer player by providing an unmatched, unique, fun and educational training environment
- ▶ **RESPECT** for the individual needs and improvement of players and coaches
- ▶ **FOCUS** on the elite player while providing her the tools to realize her goals and full potential
- ▶ **FAMILY** started our club in 1987 and continues to be the driving force in 2017 and beyond



# 30 YEARS OF CHALLENGE AND ELITE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ 900+ alumni graduated to collegiate soccer programs
- ▶ 32 Youth National Team program players
- ▶ 6 Senior National Team players
- ▶ Eleven U21 National Team players
- ▶ 27 High School All-Americans
- ▶ 10 Professional Alumni/Players: WUSA, WPS, NWSL

# 30 YEARS OF CHALLENGE HISTORY

- ▶ **Houston's Only All-Female Soccer Club**
- ▶ **First Houston Club Invited to ECNL**
- ▶ **Original Member of ECNL**
- ▶ **100+ State Cup Championships**
- ▶ **17 Regional Championships**
- ▶ **13 National Finals**
- ▶ **3 ECNL National Finalists**
- ▶ **Only Houston club to finish with Top 30 Overall National Club Ranking**

# Challenge's National Connections

- ▶ **ECNL Staff consists of US Soccer and US Club Soccer ID2 National Staff Coaches**
- ▶ **Host of Texas Shootout for nearly 30 years**
  - ▶ One of largest national showcases in country, drawing over 200 coaches annually
- ▶ **4 Time host of Final Four Showcase:**
  - ▶ 3 Times with Texas A&M and 1 time in California
- ▶ **Multiple Annual College ID Clinics, drawing over 20 name Schools due to our relationships with them (Auburn, A&M, Tennessee, Northwestern, Oklahoma State, TCU, Baylor, Missouri, and more)**
- ▶ **Host of USYSA Adidas International Cup**
  - ▶ Hosted US, Japanese, Mexican, and Chinese National Teams
- ▶ **Hosted Penn State University in 2014, prior to Elite 8 game, due to personal relationships with staff and reputation**
- ▶ **3 Time Host of Texas ECNL National Event**
- ▶ **Host of Challenge College Classic @ Meyer Park:**
  - ▶ Duke, Stanford, UNC, Texas A&M, Notre Dame played in front of 5000 spectators

# Challenge on the Cutting Edge of Youth Development

- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> club in country to implement IMPACT testing protocol
- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> club in country to acquire medical sponsorship
- ▶ Only club in country to TRAVEL with their own medical team to national events. Our medical training staff works with players through entire youth career
- ▶ Access to IMMEDIATE medical care through sponsorships
- ▶ First club in Houston to implement preseason and in-season strength and conditioning program
- ▶ In season and off season indoor, futsal, and technical programs
  - ▶ Summer Champions League, Goalkeeper Academy
- ▶ Extensive Social Media Initiative (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)
  - ▶ Top in country connects families to Challenge on a daily basis

# CHALLENGE'S COLLEGE RECRUITING PROGRAM: 2<sup>nd</sup> to None

- ▶ **Highest number of yearly college commits in Houston**
  - ▶ Over 62 Challenge grads committed to college soccer in the past two years alone
- ▶ **Staff with years of college and club coaching experience**
  - ▶ NCAA Div 1, 2, and 3 coaching and playing experience
  - ▶ NCAA Recruiting Coordinator experience
- ▶ **Unrivaled connections to college programs and coaches based on TRUST between coaching staffs**
- ▶ **Complete understanding of NCAA college recruitment rules and procedures**
- ▶ **100% of Challenge U18 ECNL players play college soccer**
- ▶ **Process is unique to each player and we assist ALL players in chasing their dreams**

# Schools Challenge ECNL Players

## Attend and are Committed to (partial List)

### ▶ ACC

- ▶ Notre Dame (2016 Team MVP)

### ▶ SEC

- ▶ Texas A&M (4)
- ▶ Auburn University (2)
- ▶ Tennessee (2)
- ▶ Vanderbilt
- ▶ Missouri
- ▶ LSU
- ▶ Georgia
- ▶ Arkansas (2)

### ▶ PAC 12

- ▶ Oregon
- ▶ Utah

### ▶ BIG 10

- ▶ Indiana
- ▶ Maryland

### ▶ BIG 12

- ▶ TCU (6)
- ▶ Oklahoma State (3)
- ▶ Oklahoma (2)
- ▶ Baylor (3)
- ▶ Texas
- ▶ Texas Tech

### ▶ IVY LEAGUE

- ▶ Harvard
- ▶ Yale

### ▶ AAC/Conference USA

- ▶ Rice (3)
- ▶ SMU (3)
- ▶ Houston (5)

# Challenge ECNL Program:

## Local Success

- ▶ **Highest Winning Percentage in Houston since 2009-current season: Most wins overall, highest points per game and largest margin of improvement**
- ▶ **Only Houston Club to qualify EVERY eligible u15-u17 team for ECNL National Playoffs**
- ▶ **Top overall Houston record in all National Events**
- ▶ **7 players selected for Regional ECNL PDP (2017)**
  - ▶ **Most in Houston**
- ▶ **3 Current US National Pool players and 5 ID2 National Selections**
- ▶ **College commitments 2013-2017 total over 80 ECNL players: Most in Houston**
- ▶ **Positive environment focusing on the development of the total player while learning possession based soccer in a fun and demanding environment**
- ▶ **Focus on Technique and total soccer development**

# Challenge ECNL Non-High School Season

Challenge will offer an optional development focused training program allowing for individual improvement within a highly competitive training environment

- ▶ **Optional for all high school age ECNL Players**
- ▶ **Coached by Challenge ECNL Staff**
- ▶ **Season will run January-early April**
- ▶ **Will attend non-ECNL college showcases**
- ▶ **Games vs NCAA Division 2 and 3 college programs**
- ▶ **Spring break trip (Florida, California, International Option)**



# ECNL's Elite Player Identification

The ECNL Player Identification Program is intended to provide a better, more efficient, and streamlined process for identifying players with the potential to play with the US Youth National Teams, The ECNL Player ID Program was created under 4 key principles:

- ▶ Players should be scouted and evaluated in their regular environment
- ▶ There should be no additional cost to players for scouting and identification
- ▶ To insure accurate evaluations, multiple people should evaluate players over multiple events
- ▶ To insure accurate evaluations, the coaches that train and develop the identified players should be consulted as the best source of information regarding overall ability, mentality, and current form

# ECNL's Elite Player Identification

By using a vast scouting network at all games and events, the ECNL provides multiple avenues into both US and foreign federation National Teams

ECNL League Play: Texas  
Conference matches and ECNL  
National Events



ECNL Texas Conference PDP and  
ID2 Regional Camps



Nike/ID2 National Camp

# ECNL Alumni: Collegiate Statistics

- ▶ 2017: 3900 ECNL Alums participate in Division 1 College Soccer
- ▶ 92% of 2017 ECNL Grads will play College Soccer
  - ▶ 85% will play Division 1 Soccer
  - ▶ 15% will play Divisions 2, 3 or NAIA
  - ▶ 78 ECNL Alums on 2016 Final 4 Rosters (USC, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgetown)
  - ▶ 22 ECNL Alums on USC Roster (National Champions)
  - ▶ 49 of 58 All Freshmen Honors in Power 5 Conferences were ECNL Alums (ACC, Pac 12, Big 10, SEC, Big12)

# ECNL Generation Reaches NWSL and USWNT Soccer

- ▶ First ECNL Grads who played u14-18, plus college soccer, are just reaching highest levels of US National Team eligibility
- ▶ 90 % of current US Youth National Team players (rostered and pool players) are ECNL players
- ▶ Nearly half of current US Senior National Team participated in ECNL
- ▶ 30 of 40 2017 NWSL draft picks were ECNL alums
- ▶ 8 of first 10 NWSL draft picks were ECNL alums

# Challenge ECNL Staff Qualifications

- ▶ **USSF and NSCAA Licenses**
- ▶ **American Collegiate Degrees and American collegiate and professional playing experience at NCAA Div. 1, 2, and 3**
- ▶ **David Smith (College Recruiting Coordinator): U19 US National Team assistant coach.**
  - ▶ World Cup Champion
- ▶ **US Club Soccer National id2 Staff**
- ▶ **US Club Soccer Player Development Program (PDP) Regional Director**
- ▶ **USSF Regional Combine Staff**
- ▶ **US Youth Soccer Region 3 Team Head Coach and Region 2 Staff Coach**
- ▶ **NCAA Div 1, 2, 3 coaching experience (Men and Women)**
  - ▶ National Top 25 programs, Professional Players, National Team Players
  - ▶ Division 1 Recruiting Coordinator (University of Wisconsin)

# Challenge and the Future of Youth Soccer

- ▶ We will **always** make decisions based on player development and the best interest of our families
- ▶ **Leagues have come and gone for 30 years and Challenge has always adapted and made thoughtful decisions**
- ▶ **Challenge has been presented opportunities to change leagues in 2017 but we are still a proud and committed member of the ECNL and look forward to its future as the top youth league in the world**
- ▶ **The majority of elite clubs around the country have voiced their continued support of the ECNL while recognizing it as the top league for youth female players. Challenge stands with the nation's elite**
- ▶ **Challenge will continue to be an innovative leader in United States girls soccer for years to come**