

Pitt-Greenville Soccer Association (PGSA) Academy (U-8 to U-10)

May 6, 2009

The PGSA Academy – Year Two: Looking Ahead

It is only fair, after the first year of this program, to let folks know what the association will be looking towards for 2009/2010. First, let me make clear, in no uncertain terms, that Academy soccer is “travel soccer”. In the Spring 2009, the PGSA Academy had four “away” sets of matches and one “home” set of matches (against other Academy teams). Few “home” matches, in part, were due to weather-related cancellations in Greenville. We have traveled to New Bern, Fayetteville, Wilmington and Winston-Salem this past Spring. That said, it is expected that players who are part of the PGSA Academy will be involved in both the Fall and Spring seasons and will make that commitment. This is not looked at as a “one season deal”. Due to the limited number roster spots available, it is imperative that each player and their parents have a sincere understanding and devotion for travel soccer. Failure to attend practices and matches places an unfair and unnecessary burden on the players who attend on a regular basis and their parents who have made financial and time commitments.

It is anticipated that there will be other NCYSA associations starting an Academy program in the Fall 2009 – although these groups are still in preliminary talks with NCYSA. We are hoping there will be additional Academy programs in Raleigh, Roanoke Rapids and Wilson next year – which would open up the opportunity for additional matches and relatively convenient travel. But those programs are not confirmed as of today.

It should be noted that current Academy players will have “right of first refusal” in coming back for the upcoming year. After I know the number of players returning – there will be an evaluation for the remaining spots for U-9/U-10 players. There will be no more than 18 to 20 players selected for the girls – and the same holds true with the U-9/U-10 boys. **This evaluation shall be held on Tuesday, May 26th at 6pm at the PGSA Soccerplex.**

As for U-8 boys and girls players, it should be noted that they will most likely train within their own groups. Only New Bern and Fayetteville have U-8 players in their programs so actual games for those players could be minimal, at best. The focus will be on skill training for the U-8 players – and not specific match play. There will be no more than 12 to 14 players taken in each U-8 gender. U-8 siblings of current Academy players have the first opportunity to sign-up. After that it's first-come and first-served. There will be a waiting list with any overflow. **The sign-up date will be on Wednesday, May 27th from 6pm to 7pm at the PGSA Soccerplex.**

In general, Academy soccer allows players the opportunity to develop at a higher level of play and to play against teams from around the region. As a result, playing Academy soccer involves a greater responsibility than participating in local recreational programs since travel and practice expectations are involved. Consider your decision to tryout for travel soccer very seriously. We actively recruiting qualified coaches and am currently working on this area. I also believe that the coaches selected will be capable of helping the boys and girls grow in their soccer skills. **There will be a parent's information meeting regarding the PGSA Academy (for “new” folks only) on Monday, May 11th at 7:30pm at Boyd Lee Park.** Please contact me if you have any questions, as well. Thank you.

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Academy Overview

The PGSA has implemented a structure for developing players on the competitive, travel soccer side. A newly organized system will allow the PGSA to monitor player development and team achievement in a broad context from U-8 to U-10.

The PGSA Academy is designed to advance young soccer players in the sport. The program will stress player development versus results. It is much more important that the PGSA

develop players within the proper framework, at this age, as opposed to demanding that teams must simply win. If the PGSA focuses on the individual performance of the player – then player development and team progress will be a result of our efforts.

The soccer curriculum will be designed specifically for youth players; therefore, your sons and daughters will be assured a proper, age-specific learning setting. When players improve their technical ability they grow in confidence and give themselves a greater capacity to process information, which is vital in the development of young soccer players.

NCYSA Academy Program

The PGSA Academy is participating in the state-wide North Carolina Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA) Academy Program. The program is designed to focus solely upon the individual technical development of the player. Players will be grouped in a pool from across U-8 to U-10. The players will be placed for weekend games/events in which no standings and no scores will be kept. The PGSA will have licensed coaches who will run the training sessions and attend the games. All PGSA Academy training sessions will focus on the fundamental skills needed as well as a strong emphasis on 1v1 and small sided games. Players are expected to play a minimum of 50% of the game.

Pool Training

Pool training is an essential element of the PGSA Academy. These teams are trained (practice) in a “pool setting” where they are grouped among players of similar ability within their age group. PGSA Academy pool training creates a dynamic environment where social awareness, competition and constant stimulation are tailored to the specific needs of U-8 to U-10 players.

Team Formation

Because of the PGSA's participation in the NCYSA Academy Program, the PGSA will have control over scheduling and team formation. Teams will be sorted for NCYSA Academy play on a weekly basis. Hence, each week a player may play with a different team. Teams will also be rearranged and mixed over the course of a season.

Playing With High Standards

Preparedness is a key factor when learning the game of soccer. We expect all PGSA Academy players to attend training and arrive early. Shirts tucked in, socks pulled up and displaying proper PGSA Academy training attire. Equipment, including a soccer ball, shin-guards and water bottle are mandatory items.

Parental Support

Positive encouragement from parents is vital to help young soccer players understand the significance (and difference) between winning and losing – and the need to develop self confidence. All instruction will be left to the coaching staff and parents should not offer advice to players during practices or games. Parents should refrain from giving any tactical feedback which can lead to confusion or frustration for the player.

Positive Coaching

Positive coaching from the PGSA staff is very important to the players' development. We must ensure that the players are instilled with the self-belief to play and have an understanding of the coach's instructions and expectations. Also, that the players accept constructive information to improve them as soccer players and team members. Encouragement at this level is an important motivational tool to making them successful, creative and well-rounded soccer players.

Cost

The Pitt-Greenville Soccer Association has developed the PGSA Academy to provide quality instruction at a very reasonable cost, providing the best value for soccer in the area. The PGSA Academy consists of an 8 month commitment by the family of each player. This 8 month commitment is divided into 2 four (4) month seasons, Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. The total

annual fees cover the uniform, training dues, association fees, referees, equipment cost and coaching fees. Limited scholarships are available for players in need of financial assistance.

Approximate Fall 2009 Cost Breakdown

PGSA Fee	\$35
NCYSA Fee	\$22
Referee Fees	\$38
Uniform	\$80
Coaching Fee	\$100
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TOTAL	\$275

FAQs

Why is the PGSA involved with the NCYSA Academy Program?

The PGSA feels that the NCYSA Academy Program is more in line with our philosophy of player development. We are looking for a program that supports U.S. Soccer's recommendation to provide an environment based on technical development of the player as a priority versus wins and losses.

Can my child participate in the PGSA Academy and play on a Recreational, Challenge or Classic team?

No. The PGSA Academy is state-sanctioned and is designed to remove the results oriented, win at all cost mentality associated with youth soccer – specifically in the very impressionable U-8 to U-10 age groups. The games will be played without published or recorded scoring and playing time is guaranteed for all players who attend training on a regular basis and maintain a great attitude. Therefore, PGSA Academy players cannot participate in other leagues.

What kind of training and game schedule will be followed by the PGSA Youth Academy?

The players will practice 2 times a week beginning in August and ending in early November for the Fall season and the beginning of January through May in the Spring. Our academy teams will participate in Academy Festivals (Saturday or Sunday) throughout the season with other participating clubs. In terms of travel – Jacksonville, New Bern and Fayetteville are all involved in the NCYSA Academy Programs.

The majority of our academy games will be played at the PGSA Soccerplex or Bradford Creek Soccer Complex. About 4 or 5 times a season we will take our Academy to another club to expose the players to something different – these will be known as Academy Festivals. There is a state-sanctioned Fall and Spring U-10 Academy Festival where Academy players throughout the state can attend.

Are players rotated between teams? How will this affect the schedule? Where/when will we know our schedule?

Yes. Players will be rotated among different teams. The NCYSA Academy Program does not have teams, per say, but rather a "pool" of players. The pool is then distributed into teams for weekend friendlies. The games will be on the same days and same locations based upon age/gender. Only game times will vary. With this in mind, players/parents will be notified at least 1 week in advance of game times.

With constant player movement, will there be any consistency with the players and teams? What about friends?

The PGSA does look at this program as a constant player movement every weekend. The program is designed to train as a pool of players whom will be organized into weekend teams. The players will have 20 friends instead of 10. These players will be training in small groups, as well.