



*Established 2009*

# The Elite Clubs National League

*2011 Annual General Meeting*

Changing the Female Youth Soccer Landscape





## 2011-2012 ECNL Competition Rules

- *Discovery Players*
- *Recruitment and Tampering*
- *Substitution Rules*

# Discovery Players 2010-2011

- \* In 2010-2011, the ECNL introduced the concept of Discovery Players to allow players from outside ECNL Member Clubs to participate in ECNL Competition.
- \* Discovery Players were required to live either: (i) within 200 miles of the ECNL Member Club training facility, or (ii) within the same state as the ECNL Member Club.
- \* Discovery Players were roster-tied to 1 specific age group.



# Discovery Players 2011-2012

- \* For the 2011-2012 season, Discovery Players may come from anywhere in the country – there is no distance limitation.
- \* Discovery Players may be added before April 1, 2012.
- \* The number of Discovery Players are still limited to 2 at U14 – U17, and 4 at U18.
- \* Discovery Players may not come from any other ECNL Member Club.
- \* Discovery Players are still roster-tied to 1 age group.



# Recruiting / No Tampering Rules

- \* While all clubs will compete on the field, ECNL Member Clubs should act professionally with respect to recruiting of players, particularly with each other.
- \* Generally, the ECNL will not provide rules, regulations, or guidelines regarding try-outs and player recruitment.
- \* However, there will be basic rules regarding recruitment and roster tampering between ECNL Member Clubs:
  - \* No ECNL Member Club may train or try-out a player from another ECNL Club until the end of the ECNL Season (the ECNL National Championships).
  - \* No ECNL roster will be accepted prior to August 1 of each year.
  - \* The month of July will be considered an “open” month for player movement, try-outs, and training.
- \* A player may be released from an ECNL Member Club and transferred to another ECNL Member Club at any time, if approved by both clubs and the Commissioner.



# 2011-2012 Substitution Rules

- \* The core of the ECNL mission is to improve the player development experience. One of the most influential factors on the player experience are the substitution rules.
- \* As a club-driven league, the ECNL Member Clubs must make a decision to support substitution rules that provide the best possible developmental environment, while also considering the current reality of the American youth soccer culture.
- \* The more the ECNL technical framework reflects the game as it is played at the highest levels, the better ECNL players will be to play at any level – youth, collegiate, or international.



# 2011-2012 Substitution Rules

- \* Restricted Substitution Rules – POSITIVES:
  - \* Increases tactical demands of the game
  - \* Allows technical expression of individual players
  - \* Demands better coaching and game management
  - \* Develops more sophisticated players
- \* Restricted Substitution Rules - CHALLENGES:
  - \* Requires new roster management skills
  - \* Requires educating players and parents
  - \* Requires performance from all players on a roster



# 2011-2012 Substitution Rules

- \* 2011-2012 Substitution Rules:

- \* U18: There will be no re-entry in the game for all conference and cross-conference games. For games at National Showcase Events, there will be no re-entry in a half.
- \* U14-U17: There will be no re-entry in a half for all games.

- \* 2012-2013 Substitution Rules:

- \* For the 2012-2013 season, clubs should prepare for no re-entry in the game at additional age groups.





## ECNL 2011-2012 Competition Format

*Changes to the 2011-  
2012 Structure*

# Fundamentals of ECNL Competition

- \* The ECNL National Showcase Events are the “jewel” of the ECNL – allowing competition between top clubs across the country in a format where: (i) the results matter; and (ii) the results build towards a championship.
- \* The ECNL Conferences will provide new excitement and challenge for teams and players by capitalizing on existing regional rivalry and providing balanced home and away competition schedules.
- \* The promotion and relegation system within the ECNL is unique in American youth soccer, and provides competitive value and excitement to games that otherwise may lack meaning.



# 2011-2012 Structure – U15 – U18

- \* Challenge A – 30 teams
- \* Challenge B – 36 teams in 2 different divisions of 18 teams each
- \* There will be 2 Competition Tables for every ECNL team:
  - \* (i) the Conference Competition Table; and
  - \* (ii) the National Competition Table.
- \* Every ECNL team can potentially win 2 different competitions over the course of the year:
  - \* (i) the Conference Championship; and
  - \* (ii) either the Challenge A Championship or Challenge B Championship.
- \* *Note: We will look to re-brand the names of the flights for the 2011-2012 season.*



# 2011-2012 Structure – U15 – U18 Tables

- \* All Conference games will count towards the Conference Competition Table and the Conference Championship.
- \* All Conference Games, Cross-Conference Games, and National Showcase Event Games played against teams in your flight will count towards the National Competition Table and the ECNL National Championship. In other words, only “A Flight” vs. “A Flight” games, or “B Flight” vs. “B Flight” games, will count in the National Competition Table.
- \* Due to differing numbers of games played by the teams, the National Competition Table will be based on points-per-game.
- \* There will be a Challenge A and a Challenge B ECNL National Champion, as well as 8 ECNL Conference Champions.



# 2011-2012 Structure – U15 – U18 National Championships

- \* The top 16 teams in Challenge A will qualify for the ECNL National Championship Group. They will be placed into a 4-game knock-out bracket, seeded based on their position in the National Competition Table (1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, etc.). There will be consolation games for losing teams.
- \* Teams in the ECNL National Championship Group will play 4 games in 4 days. All other teams will play 3 games in 3 days.
- \* The bottom 4 teams from Challenge A (27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> place) will automatically be relegated to Challenge B for the 2012-2013 season.
- \* The top 2 teams from each Challenge B division will be automatically promoted to Challenge A for the 2012-2013 season. These teams will be placed into a Challenge B National Championship (semi-final, friendly, final) to determine the ECNL Challenge B National Champion.
- \* The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place team from each Challenge B division, and the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> place team from the Challenge A division, (6 total teams) will be placed in the Promotion / Relegation Play-Off Round Robin. They will be placed in 2 groups of 3, with the winner of each group playing in a Promotion Final for the 2012-2013 Challenge A spot.
- \* In total, between 4-5 teams will be promoted and relegated for 2012-2013.



# 2011-2012 Structure – U14

- \* U-14 teams play only Conference and Cross-Conference Games in 2011-2012. As such, there are no “flights” at U14.
- \* There will only be a Conference Competition Table at U14.
- \* The top 2 U14 teams from each conference will qualify for the ECNL National Championship Group. They will be placed into a 4-game knock-out bracket, seeded based on their position in the National Competition Table (1 vs. 16, 2 vs. 15, etc.). There will be consolation games for losing teams.
- \* The remaining 54 U14 teams will play showcase games at the ECNL National Championship.
- \* At the end of the 2011-2012 season, the Overall Club Ranking from the U15-U18 age groups will determine placement of the U14 team in the A Flight or B flight as U15s.



# 2011-2012 Structure – The ECNL Overall Club Champion

- \* The ECNL Overall Club Champion will be crowned based on the total Club Points earned by each team within the club at U15-U18, based upon their standing within the National Competition Table. U14 standings will not count in the ECNL Overall Club Champion.
- \* Bonus Club Points will be awarded to Conference Champions and Conference 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams.
- \* Bonus Club Points will be awarded to the champions and finalists within each National Competition Table.



# 2012-2012 ECNL Regular Season Events

## 2011-12 ECNL REGULAR-SEASON EVENTS

<b>October 8-10, 2011</b>	ECNL Regular-Season Event #1	<b>Phoenix, AZ</b> <i>Reach 11 Soccer Complex</i>
<b>December 28-30, 2011</b>	ECNL Regular-Season Event #2	<b>Sanford, Fla.</b> <i>Sylvan Lake Park &amp; Seminole Soccer Complex</i>
<b>February 24-26, 2012</b>	ECNL Regular-Season Event #3	<b>San Antonio, Texas</b> <i>STAR Soccer Complex</i>
<b>March 31 - April 2, 2012</b>	ECNL Regular-Season Event #4	<b>San Diego, CA</b> <i>San Diego Polo Club</i>
<b>May 26-28, 2012</b>	ECNL Regular-Season Event #5	<b>Zarephath, N.J.</b> <i>PDA Soccer Complex</i>





# ECNL Player Identification Program

*2010-2011 Overview*  
*2011-2012 New Initiatives*

# ECNL Player Identification Program – Foundation Principles

- \* The ECNL Player Identification Program was created with the following foundation principles:
  - \* Players should be initially scouted and evaluated within their regular club competition environment.
  - \* Players should be rated and evaluated for inclusion in identification programs based on a combination of:
    - \* (i) objective and independent scouting information; and
    - \* (ii) information from the player's regular trainers and coaches.
  - \* There should be zero or very little cost to players for participating in national identification and development programs
  - \* To insure thoroughness and accurate evaluations, the coaches that train and develop the identified players should be consulted as the best source of information regarding the overall ability, mentality, and current form of their players.
  - \* National identification and development programs should not create significant additional demands on the calendar of the elite player



# ECNL Player Identification program: 2010-2011 Overview

- \* 2010-2011 Player Identification Program Participation
  - \* Over 450 individual scouting entries for players in the 1994 and 1995 age groups were collected from the Temecula, Final Four and Orlando ECNL National Showcase Events to identify and evaluate players for the 2011 ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Camp.
  - \* Approximately 65 ECNL players attended the 2011 ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Camp. (Approximately 10 invitations were declined due to proximity to a US Soccer National Team Camp.)
  - \* 17 ECNL Players will travel to London in August based on their performances over the year and at the camp. These players will compete in 3 games against: (i) Arsenal, (ii) Bristol Academy (FA Cup Runner Up); and (iii) Chelsea or Aston Villa.



# ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Training Camp Review

- ⦿ The ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Camp was held at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL.
- ⦿ The camp included 4 training sessions and 2 11 vs. 11 matches.
- ⦿ Players were fitted with GPS monitoring equipment to track their work rate and distance covered, and Dr. Jason Vescovi presented his findings to the players regarding the physical demands of the game at youth and professional levels.
- ⦿ Former US Soccer National Team players Mia Hamm and Kristine Lilly presented to the players.
- ⦿ US Soccer Development Director Jillian Ellis and Technical Advisor Mike Dickey were in attendance.
- ⦿ A Technical Report from the camp was compiled and provided to all Member Clubs.



# ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Training Camp

## Developmental Themes

- \* The staff identified 4 tactical trends that presented themselves throughout the camp:
  - \* **Lack of a Target Forward** – While many players were good at running at defenders and running behind, few could hold play up
  - \* **Back Four Organization** – Was generally very good, but lacked understanding on maintaining compactness between lines
  - \* **Playmaking Center Midfielders** – There was no deep-lying playmaker that dictated pace and rhythm of the game; most play-making midfielders were more like withdrawn forwards
  - \* **Attacking Movement and Running** – Was very dynamic to get behind the defense, and showed good understanding of timing and angles



# ECNL / id<sup>2</sup> National Training Camp

## Developmental Themes

- \* Overall, the technical quality of the players in the camp was very high.
- \* However, the staff identified 3 technical trends that presented themselves throughout the camp:
  - \* **Heading** – Was generally poor, particularly in the box (offensive and defensive)
  - \* **Serving** – While dead-ball service was good, service in the flow of the game was erratic and inconsistent
  - \* **Speed of Play** – Almost every player would have done better to “drop a touch”



# ECNL Player Identification Program – 2011-2012 Expectations

- \* The Player Identification Program is a critical part of the ECNL, and every Member Club must contribute to it.
  - \* Every club must have 3 scouts. The ECNL Director, or the Member Club DOC must be 1 of the 3 nominated scouts. The ECNL reserves the right to accept or reject any nominated scout.
  - \* Every Member Club will be assigned to scout 1 game per day, the first 2 days of every ECNL National Showcase Event they attend.
  - \* Every game assigned to the Member Club must be scouted by 1 of the 3 ECNL Scouts. Any changes to the official ECNL Scouts must be pre-approved by the ECNL.
  - \* Each ECNL Scout will receive head-to-toe Nike apparel which must be worn while scouting ECNL Competitions.



# ECNL Player Identification Program Scouting Protocol

- \* The professionalism of every ECNL Scout impacts the credibility of the ECNL and the Player Identification Program:
  - \* Attend the entire game
  - \* Wear the required apparel
  - \* Introduce yourself to the coaches and collect a Scouting Schematic
  - \* Sit between the benches and be visible
  - \* Use the Scouting Evaluation Form for note-taking
  - \* Do not overly socialize
  - \* Input your data within 7 days of the event
- \* The process for data entry will be distributed to all ECNL Scouts prior to the first ECNL National Showcase Event.
- \* Conference calls will be held with all ECNL Scouts prior to every ECNL National Showcase Events.



# ECNL Player Identification Program – Player Rating and Commentary

- \* All players in the game of a “Regional” level and above should be identified and rated.
- \* If there are no players at this level, the top player from each team should be identified and rated.
- \* Consider the birth year of the players (use the Scouting Schematic)
- \* Look for SPECIAL qualities
- \* Look for potential as much as current ability
- \* Where possible, provide insight on mentality
- \* Be specific in your commentary



# ECNL Player Identification Program – id<sup>2</sup> Relationship

- \* The ECNL Player Identification Program will continue to be closely aligned with US Club Soccer's id<sup>2</sup> Program in 2011-2012.
- \* The ECNL Player Identification Program will focus on the 1993-1994, 1995, and 1996 age groups in 2011-2012.
- \* Each Member Club will be asked to nominate the top players in their club from the 1997 and 1998 age groups for participation in the id<sup>2</sup> Program.
- \* An integrated identification process with id<sup>2</sup>, including all players from 1997 – 1994, will insure no players are overlooked:
  - \* 1997 – 1998: Identification through US Club Soccer id<sup>2</sup>
  - \* 1996 – 1993: Identification through ECNL



# New Player Identification Programming - ECNL Conference Combines

- \* Beginning in the 2011-2012 season, the ECNL will support “Conference Combines” for every ECNL Conference.
- \* Conference Combines will include top players within designated age groups from every ECNL club within the conference, and are designed to provide additional recognition and exposure for these players.
- \* Conference Combines will be held over 2 days, in locations where almost every player can drive with only 1 overnight stay required.



# ECNL Conference Combines – Structure

- \* Conference Combines will combine the top players in specified birth years from multiple clubs.
- \* Players will be placed into mixed teams for 2 11 vs. 11 games (one Saturday and one Sunday).
- \* A Technical Presentation will be provided to the players Saturday evening.
- \* Host clubs will be responsible for coordinating field venues.
- \* ECNL will contribute significant funding towards each combine to help with fixed costs, staffing and equipment.
- \* Conference Combines will be scheduled to avoid conflicts with ECNL Competitions.
- \* Participation in Conference Combines is not mandatory for ECNL clubs.



# ECNL Conference Combines – Locations

- \* Midwest – West Combine (Milwaukee, WI or Chicago, IL): Minnesota Thunder, FC Milwaukee, Eclipse Select, Sockers, SLSG
- \* Midwest – East Combine (Detroit, MI): Michigan Hawks, Vardar, Carmel, Ohio Premier, Ohio Elite
- \* Texas Combine (Dallas, TX ): Sting, Texans, Solar, FC Dallas, D’Feeters, Lonestar, Challenge, Tulsa Hurricane
- \* Coast Combine (Los Angeles, CA): Slammers, Surf, Real So Cal, So Cal Blues, Arsenal, Irvine, West Coast, Eagles, Las Vegas Premier, Heat FC
- \* Northeast Combine (New Jersey): PDA, World Class, East Meadow, Albertson, Stars, Scorpions, CFC, SoccerPlus
- \* Mid-Atlantic Combine (Washington DC): Richmond Strikers, FC Virginia, McLean, Freestate, Bethesda, FC Delco, FC Bucks, Penn Fusion
- \* Southeast Combine (Greensboro, NC): BUSA, GSA, Concorde, Atlanta Fire, CESA, Charlotte, CASL, VA Rush
- \* Northwest Combine (San Francisco, CA): DeAnza, San Juan, Pleasanton, Mustang, Washington Premier, Crossfire
- \* Mountain Combine (Denver ): CO Rush, Real, CO Storm, Utah Avalanche, Sereno, SC Del Sol, KCFC, Blue Valley



# ECNL Player Identification Program – Summary

- \* The ECNL Player Identification Program can be the best scouting program in the country.
- \* The ECNL Player Identification Program has 3 primary goals:
  - \* Identify top players for consideration for participation in US Soccer youth national teams
  - \* Provide a unique developmental experience for top players by allowing best vs. best training and competition
  - \* Provide recognition and reward for top players for their ability and performance
- \* This program is run by the clubs, for the club players. The more energy and support invested in this program by the ECNL and Member Clubs, the more players and clubs will see rewards.





## 2011-2012 ECNL Expansion and growth

*Expansion  
ECNL Standards  
New Platforms*

# ECNL Standards

- \* In order to accomplish the mission of improving the player development environment, the ECNL and its Member Clubs must raise the standards and expectations for all clubs, coaches, and players within the ECNL.
- \* ECNL Standards must become **minimum** requirements for being a member club or coach within the ECNL. These standards must address, among other areas:
  - \* Coach licensing and education
  - \* Training Frequencies
  - \* Technical Reporting / Season Long Training Plan
  - \* Administration and Structure
  - \* Facilities



# ECNL Standards Committee

- \* A Standards Committee has been created to develop recommendations for the ECNL Standards.
- \* The Committee will use the existing ECNL Standards and Guidelines, the US Soccer Development Academy Requirements and Evaluations, and other material as a starting point.
- \* The Committee will present its recommendations to the Board of Directors in Fall 2011.
- \* ECNL Standards Committee:
  - \* Members: Doug Bracken, Erik Bushey, Jason Dewhurst, Jay Howell, Christian Lavers, Clyde Watson
  - \* Ad Hoc Member: Anson Dorrance



# ECNL Standards - Implementation

- \* The ECNL Standards will be requirements for Member Clubs.
- \* Clubs will be provided with time to reach the ECNL Standards where appropriate.
- \* The ECNL Standards will insure that existing Member Clubs maintain the quality expected in the ECNL, and that clubs outside the ECNL know the minimum expectations for membership.



# New Program – ECNL Coaching Education

- \* “When you stop learning, you stop teaching.” --Arsene Wenger
- \* For the 2011-2012 season, the ECNL will begin to have regular coaching education seminars held in conjunction with every ECNL National Showcase Event.
- \* The coaches from every participating club will arrive one day early (Wednesday night if competition begins Friday), for a 3-4 hour educational seminar the morning before ECNL competition:
  - \* Presentations and On-Field Sessions from Technical Leaders
  - \* Presentations from Subject Matter Experts
  - \* Round-Table Discussions with Selected Coaches (ECNL, college, youth national team)





State of the ECNL

*Keys to the Future*

# State of the ECNL – Past

- \* In March of 2009, the ECNL was a concept and an idea ...
- \* Most people within the soccer community did not believe that clubs could work together to improve the game, and that it would quickly fall apart.
- \* Instead, the dedication, humility, and vision of technical leaders has created a program that is changing the landscape of American female youth soccer.



# State of the ECNL – Present

- \* In 2011-2012, the ECNL will be:
  - \* The largest and most elite youth female soccer competition in the country
  - \* The most extensive scouting network in the country
  - \* The best player identification program in the country
  - \* The best college showcase platform in the country
  - \* The best place for top female soccer players to develop and learn to love the game
  - \* **The only platform in the country led and governed by youth soccer clubs and their leadership**



# State of the ECNL - Future

- \* The next 12 months will be a time of tremendous excitement, challenge and opportunity.
- \* During this transition, the most important factors for success of the ECNL and the Member Clubs are clear and constant:
  - \* Technical Leaders Displaying **Professionalism**
  - \* Technical Leaders **Cooperating Together**
  - \* Technical Leaders Making Decisions for the **Long-Term**



# State of the ECNL – Areas for Perfect Execution

- \* **ECNL Competition**

- \* Educate your players and parents about why the ECNL is important
- \* Make the game-day experience special

- \* **Outside Impacts**

- \* Expect pressure from outside
- \* Work cooperatively with your conference members to proactively solve problems
- \* Engage ECNL leadership for support and advice

- \* **Internal Impacts**

- \* Be a professional administratively and technically
- \* Be a club, not a collection of teams



# The ECNL and US Soccer

- \* US Soccer is the governing body of the sport, and responsible for all developmental and competition initiatives in the country.
- \* The ECNL exists, in part, to help US Soccer achieve its goal of improving American soccer players and coaches, and identifying the very best American players.
- \* ECNL Member Clubs must be supportive of US Soccer programming and the Technical Advisors within their market:
  - \* Develop a relationship with your Technical Advisor
  - \* Support the US Soccer Market Training Centers
  - \* Coach and teach with the “End Game” in Mind



# ECNL Standards

- \* There should be no difference between the official ECNL Standards and the expectations of a **Professional Youth Development Soccer Club** or Leader.
- \* ECNL Member Clubs are supposed to be **Destination Clubs** for developing the very best.



# State of the ECNL

Thank you for your time, support, and belief in the ECNL.

You are leading a fundamental shift in female youth soccer that will forever change the experience of American female players.

