

United Futbol Academy April 2013

Academy Pool Placement

At United FA, player development is a main goal of our coaching philosophy. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to have a clear set of expectations for our players and help them understand how we plan to help them in their development.

Effective as of the Fall 2013/Spring 2014 Season, United FA will use the following guidelines regarding the naming and creation of Academy pools, and all teams will be named with a color designation.

Upon acceptance into the Academy Program, United FA will offer U9 and U10 players a roster spot in a Pool (for example in Pool 1). The Pool levels are currently anticipated to be Pool 1, 2 or 3. During team camp, coaches will determine at a more fine degree what level players are at initially for the designation of pool teams. Each pool is slated to have two teams.

For Age Levels U11 and older, players will be offered a roster spot on a specific team; however, the player movement details described below will still be applicable to all players in these older age groups.

Age Groups U9 / U10 Pools and corresponding team names will be as follows:

| | |
|--------|---------------|
| Pool 1 | Red/Black |
| Pool 2 | White/Silver |
| Pool 3 | Bronze/Copper |

For age groups U11 and older, team names will be as follows:

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| First Team | Red |
| Second Team | Black |
| Third Team | White |
| Fourth Team | Silver |
| Fifth Team | Bronze |
| Sixth Team | Copper |

Academy Player Movement

Because Academy aged players develop at such different rates, it is important to understand that coaches will be moving players on a regular basis. From the time a player arrives at team camp, they will be under constant evaluation to make sure they are able to receive the proper challenges as well as the successes that are so important for their individual development. Players that are near the

bottom of one pool and the top of the next pool will be similar in ability, but have subtle differences in decision making ability, touch on the ball, or the natural gift of athleticism.

It is anticipated that players may be moved during the following times:

- 1) Middle of the Fall season (approximately mid-October)
- 2) The winter off-season (January typically) Along these lines, coaches may hold a combine within the age group during January to help make any final decisions on player movement at this time
- 3) After Spring Break (typically April)
- 4) Tryouts in May/June

PLEASE NOTE: All player movement will be approved by the Academy Director and is solely based on the best interest of the individual player and his/her development.

During the season, it is still possible for players to train with and participate in games with other pools / teams without having been officially moved from one pool / team to another. This provides coaches with the opportunity to see how a player reacts to a different level of play and alleviates additional pressure on a player being moved on a permanent basis. Communication on training or playing games with a different pool or team will be done between coach and parent.

The coaches and staff at United FA are sensitive to the impact of moving players between pools / teams, and feel that mixing players for training as well as games will help in several ways. Players will have the ability to get to know the players in their own pool, other pools, and their age group. They will have the opportunity to be exposed to other coaches in their age group as well. It is important that parents continually support their players and help them understand that it is commonplace for players to move between pools / teams. In this way any anxiety or stress about the process can be removed so that all players can improve and excel at their own pace.

Since the inception of United FA, which resulted from the merger of ASA and Forsyth Fusion, there has been an influx of a greater number of like-ability players. Prior to the merge, there would be a more typical spread of players at the "A" team level (6 to 10 athletes) and then a "gap" to the next ability group, and so on. As the entire player pool expands, we have seen an increase in the number of players available at ALL levels, which results in a greater challenge for parents to understand their player's appropriate level of play.

It is important to note that at the Academy Level (U9 through U12), the main focus will continue to be the player as opposed to the team. Only at the U12 level do we begin some focus on the team and tactics. Technique will still be worked more than tactics, which are more in line with the U13 and older program.

At the U13 and older level, United FA has a goal of having one team at each level of play and preferably two teams at the top level. We are fortunate to have achieved this goal, but to maintain these teams, we require between 28 - 32 players at a similar ability level. This presents a challenge to the coaching staff in that they must have a larger focus on a larger number of athletes, as well as assuring the teams below the top level teams are also competitive to avoid having the emphasis only on the top 30 players in an age group and provide challenges to all levels of play.

Thank you for being a member of United FA, and we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with your children.

Academy Director and Director of Player Development
Don Schultz