



WHITECAPS AND BC SOCCER STRENGTHEN 2009 SUPER Y PROGRAM

Vancouver Whitecaps FC, in conjunction with BC Soccer, announced today a restructure to the United Soccer Leagues (USL) Super Y-League affiliate program. The revised program, rebranded under the banner "Professional Development Partners," will allow British Columbia-based clubs to operate under District jurisdiction, with additional support for local club infrastructure, as well as a more integrated player development model.

The transition from affiliate to Professional Development Partners recognizes that the participating clubs within the established District structure are independent, but partners in the overall professional development of players and the game of soccer. BC Soccer will continue to provide governance; however, the Whitecaps role will transition from operational involvement to using their professional network to enhance the global opportunities within the league, and to research and plan for the upcoming seasons.

The 2008 affiliates (Mountain WFC, Coastal WFC, and Surrey WFC), along with Abbotsford Mariners, Okanagan, West Coast Capitals, and the newly-formed Coquitlam Metro Ford, will all become Professional Development Partners and compete in the 2009 Super Y-League season. All clubs will field U-13 to U-16 Boys and Girls teams in 2009.

"As partners in development, we are working closely with BC Soccer to strengthen the development path in British Columbia," said Whitecaps director of youth development, Dan Lenarduzzi. "We share the philosophy that club-based programs are the infrastructure to a strong soccer network and regional delivery method. The Professional Development Partner model puts more emphasis on regional club infrastructure, while allowing for the exploration of opportunities that are hand-in-hand with the club network within BC Soccer's District membership."

"We continue to collaborate with our partners, including Vancouver Whitecaps FC, and the various BC Soccer membership groups that are involved in the growth of the BC player development model," said BC Soccer executive director, Bjorn Osieck. "This includes the requirements of BC Soccer's Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) program, as well as the growing need for resources and services for clubs across the province. In addition, it will allow for regionalization and club development to synergize grassroots programs with high performance opportunities."

An example of this collaboration is the creation of the Super Y-League Advisory Committee (SYLAC), which will include members of each Professional Development Partner, as well as the Whitecaps and BC Soccer. In addition to sharing information, the committee will help steer the Partners' participation in the Super Y-League in a more inclusive fashion off the field, while ensuring a highly competitive environment on the field. The SYLAC will advocate at all levels of the game.

Professional Development Partners





The Whitecaps and BC Soccer Professional Development Partners will continue to use the Super Y-League as their competitive league platform. This platform will build upon the existing North American Super Y-League program, while developing more BC-based direction and benefits. In 2009, the Super Y-League Pacific Northwest division will operate purely as a BC-based division with enhanced local benefits. Those benefits include alignment to maximize province-wide high performance scouting, as well as future benefits to schedule breaks for additional integrated high performance opportunities like the BC provincial team program.

The 2009 platform will continue to allow for American competition in the Super Y-League playoffs, as over 600 Super Y-League teams compete across eight geographic divisions in North America. All teams will compete for a berth in the Super Y-League North American Finals, where over 130 of the best youth soccer teams in the United States and Canada meet in a five-day tournament in Florida. In 2008, 13 BC-based teams reached the championship finals in Florida. The highlights include Mountain WFC U-16 Boys winning the North American championship, as well as 13 BC players being selected as tournament all-stars.

Additional information - including player evaluations and other major announcements - will be made in the near future.

For more information please contact the Whitecaps Managing Director of Professional Development at cmurphy@whitecapsfc.com.

Professional Development Partners

