

NEWS RELEASE

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US Club Soccer welcomes Arkansas Premier Clubs

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CHARLESTON, S.C. (April 24, 2018) – US Club Soccer is proud to sanction the Arkansas Premier Clubs (APC) to provide state, regional and national competition opportunities for its 11-U through 18/19-U boys and girls age groups.

Seven of the state's top clubs, led by Directors of Coaching seeking innovative player-centric programming, have created the APC as their primary competitive platform. Those clubs are from the Little Rock, Russellville, Fort Smith and Northwest Arkansas areas:

- Arkansas Comets (Fayetteville)
- Arkansas United (Little Rock)
- Arkansas Valley Soccer Association (Russellville)
- Mighty Bluebirds (Little Rock)
- Real Arkansas (Maumelle)
- River Valley (Fort Smith)
- Sporting Arkansas (Bentonville)

Four of those clubs – Arkansas Comets, Arkansas United, Mighty Bluebirds and Sporting Arkansas – are current members of the Red River NPL. The [Red River NPL](#) includes 14 clubs from Arkansas, south Kansas, Oklahoma and north Texas. Now, about a year after announcing the Red River NPL's creation, those Arkansas clubs are also helping to start a more localized, state model in the APC.

"We're honored to welcome the Arkansas Premier Clubs to a Players First-motivated environment," said John Borozzi, US Club Soccer Vice President. "We commend these forward-thinking DOCs for this league structure and their plans to take advantage of many resources, including: PDPs, LaLiga Formation Methodology, Players First, State Cup and the National Cup."

The Arkansas Premier Clubs was founded on four platforms:

- Competition
- Player Identification
- Club, Coach and Referee Development
- US Club Soccer's Players First and Player Health & Safety emphasis

APC league scheduling will include periodization influenced by its clubs' technical directors. This results in a league schedule that accounts for rest and recovery periods, as well as proper game-to-training-session ratios for a consistent and annualized calendar for the player and their families.

These Arkansas members have joined other recent movements around the country of top clubs working together to form the best league environments for their players under US Club Soccer. The most recent examples are the [United Soccer Clubs](#) in Texas – created in 2015 – and the [Oklahoma Premier Clubs](#) – created in 2017.

With its Oklahoman neighbors, specifically, the APC is planning collaboration of PDPs, coaching education and league programming. “Oklahoma Premier Clubs is extremely excited for the clubs and players who will be forming the APC,” said Jim Tindell, Oklahoma Premier Clubs President. “We are confident this will lead to an innovative transformation of the game in Arkansas and beyond. We are excited and look forward to partnering with the APC on many levels. Congratulations to the state of Arkansas.”

The APC receives a plethora of benefits as part of its US Club Soccer membership. This includes [Players First](#), which is the primary vessel for US Club Soccer to accomplish its mission to foster the growth and development of soccer clubs throughout the United States to create the best possible development environment for players of all ages in every club.

Players First is a branded, holistic club soccer experience for parents and players which emphasizes the development of each individual to his or her full potential, and helps parents make better choices about where their children should play. Players First is anchored by five pillars:

- Club Development
- Coaching Development
- Player Development
- Parent Engagement & Education
- Player Health & Safety

US Club Soccer has been consistent that Player Health & Safety is US Club Soccer’s “[first and most important responsibility](#).” That commitment has been demonstrated through various initiatives and Players First partnerships, including FIFA 11+, Fit for 90, Player’s Health and Sideline Sports Doc.

US Club Soccer has implemented best-in-class background checks, as part of its background screening process for all registered staff. The effort is coupled with a requirement for those registered staff to complete a Sideline Sports Doc/US Club Soccer online injury recognition course.

Arkansas Premier Clubs members will also enjoy exposure to [Player Development Programs \(PDPs\)](#) and the [id² Program](#). These programs help provide identification and development to the entire country, including those regions traditionally underserved by opportunities.

Quote from participating clubs:

Paul Kimbrough- Arkansas Valley

APC represents a new paradigm for Soccer in our state. AVSA is committed to improving our soccer culture here in Arkansas and with APC we have found a collection of clubs who share our focus. Each APC member shares a similar mission to further our sport. Our agreement brings the leading soccer clubs in Arkansas together to strengthen our environment. APC brings the highest level of player, coach, and club development to our members.

Samir Haj - Arkansas Comets

As we have done for the last three decades, the Arkansas Comets will continue to pursue the best possible soccer experience for our players. We are very excited to join with like-minded clubs in creating the APC to be a progressive, innovative, comprehensive, player- centric environment.

Alex Burgess - Real Arkansas

I am pleased to announce that Real Arkansas is joining with the other highly competitive clubs in our state to form the Arkansas Premier Clubs(APC), which will participate as a part of US Club Soccer. The member clubs will have the ability to compete in a state league that will be highly competitive, as well as have the potential to compete in the National Premier League, and the US Club National Championship.

The APC represents a new opportunity and era for soccer in our state. Real Arkansas, along with the other member clubs, is committed to improving the soccer culture in Arkansas. In forming the APC, we have found a collection of clubs who share our

focus. And each APC member shares a similar mission to further our sport and provide better opportunities for the youth of our state.

The APC brings the highest level of players, coaches, and clubs together for one purpose: the further development of our members. We are excited to inform you all of this new opportunity and we are certain that, with this announcement, competitive soccer has advanced to a higher level than has previously been seen in Arkansas Soccer.

Mark Gibbs - Arkansas United

“We are excited about the opportunity to partner with the strongest clubs in Arkansas, by developing Arkansas Premier Clubs and the formation of Arkansas Premier League. We have formed a state/regional platform that will increase the opportunities for the players here to compete and develop. We are 100 percent focused on the development of the players. We will continue to work and expand with like-minded clubs, leagues and US Club Soccer to provide the best opportunities for the players, referees, and coaches in our state.”

Max Habereeder - Sporting Arkansas

Sporting Arkansas is excited to be a part of Arkansas Premier Clubs. We believe that the collaborative approach between the like-minded member clubs will be a game changer in the state of Arkansas. This new platform through US Club will provide the best experience for all our players at all developmental levels. APC’s focus on establishing higher standards for all of its member clubs directly aligns with our club’s vision and will help to offer the best experience to all of our members. We are looking forward to this working with the APC clubs on these new innovative player-centric programs.

ABOUT US CLUB SOCCER:

A National Association member of the U.S. Soccer Federation, **US Club Soccer** fosters the growth and development of soccer clubs in order to create the best possible environment for players of all ages.

Anchored by **Players First** and its five pillars of Club Development, Coaching Development, Player Development, Parent Engagement & Education and Player Health & Safety, US Club Soccer offers registration, league- and cup-based competition platforms, player identification and a variety of other programming, resources and services.

US Club Soccer is sponsored by Nike and supported by LaLiga through a technical partnership.

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