

# WILMINGTON HAMMERHEADS YOUTH SOCCER

Return to play guidelines, policies and plans in  
response to spring, 2020 COVID-19

April, 2020

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# When Can We Start Playing Again?

## *WHYFC 7-week Summer Plan: 'Summer 7s'*

As soon as we are allowed back on the soccer fields we will begin our 7-week summer program. Upon return to the fields we will use the following 7 weeks to introduce what we are calling WHYFC Summer 7s. Below are the details of the program:

- Each age group throughout all WHYFC programming will be provided a 2x weekly game schedule, which will give each player in the entire WHYFC player pool 2 games per week for 7 weeks. Summer 7s will occur in the evenings during the work week (no weekends)
- 7 vs. 7 is the preferred game set-up for our Summer 7s program
- Each Summer 7s night will include a dynamic warm-up (10 mins), technical work (10 mins) and then a 50 minute game (2x25 minute halves)
- Other age groups and sometimes different genders (boys vs. girls or boys mixed with girls) will be paired each week to bring variety to the games and experience.
  - Example I: on week 3 of Summer 7s, the 2004 boys player pool will be paired with the 2003 boys player pool. Multiple, skill appropriate games will be created with these two player pools.
  - Example II: on week 6 of Summer 7s, the 2005 Girls player pool will be paired with the 2006 boys player pool. Multiple, skill-appropriate games will be created with these two player pools.
- Formation of Summer 7 teams is based on player pool that is available each week. It is likely that many players will play with the current team and teammates based on the skill-based formation of teams, but it is equally likely that players will play with and against different players in an organized and competitive setting.
- WHYFC staff will work to build equal teams that challenge the players that are on both teams. This may see WHYFC teammates playing against each other on one game day and with each other on another. No formal teams will be formed. The better the attendance of summer 7s, the better the games and the environment.

# Questions about Summer 7s program?

## ***I can't be there for all 7 weeks of programming?***

This is ok. The program is built and designed for flexibility and variations in player turnout. This is an in-house league so we know the players and will quickly be able to create 7 vs. 7 teams that will push and challenge the players while also having fun.

## ***Who is going to coach?***

There will be one coach per game. Sometimes it will be a coach your player knows and is familiar with and sometimes it will not. This coach will take the assigned player pool through a dynamic warm up and technical warm up together, before splitting into teams and playing the games. This coach will also referee the games.

## ***This isn't a "real" game? And will I even be challenged?***

There won't be 2 linesman and player cards, no. We are forming this program inside of our club so that (a) we don't have to rely on any other teams or clubs in these uncertain times and (b) so that we can get our kids on the fields playing again without any travel and without any costs. Players of all age groups will get as much out of this program as they are willing to put into it. We will put players on teams based on skill level. If the majority of players in each age group show up to Summer 7s, we will create competitive skill appropriate games.

## ***I want to play with my team.***

WHYFC teams are the starting point of our entire Summer 7s program. Your team will all be on the same Summer 7s schedule, carpools can stay together and teams will very much stay connected during the Summer 7s, but you won't always play with your team. A likely early match-up in the Summer 7s is 7/8 players from a WHYFC team evenly paired against the other 7/8 players from the team. Later in the series your player pool could be paired with a year older/younger player pool and teams will be built for the evening's games.

## ***How much does it cost?***

Nothing. The final spring payment that many families paid allows us to put this league in place at no additional cost.

## ***I don't want to participate?***

It is not mandatory. It is a response to this unique circumstance we have all gone through. We hope that the players will want to be back on the fields, we think this program can be really cool. The better the turnout and buy-in by our players, the better this will be. There are no refunds connected to not playing in the Summer 7s.

# WHYFC Club Renewal Program and New Player Evaluations

*Plans to build teams as we prepare for fall, 2020*

Many who have been a part of our club for years are familiar with the tryout processes we have consistently implemented in the past. COVID-19 has created a need for adjustment and change in order to get our teams formed in a timely fashion based on the circumstances. Below are details:

- The 2020-21 Coaching Roster will be released on or before May 1, 2020.
- Following the release of the coaching roster, we will be launching the 'WHYFC Club Renewal Program'. This is an opportunity for those players who are a part of WHYFC to commit to playing for WHYFC in the 2020-21 season. This program and its implementation is based on the fact that our coaches know their players. Our coaches are communicating, creating depth charts and making sure that every player and their abilities are accounted for as we launch this program.
  - Current WHYFC Players/families will be asked to commit to playing for WHYFC in the 2020-21 year, without initial team placement (see below).
  - There is no fee for this Club Renewal Program
  - As a result of a player's commitment via the Club Renewal Program, there is no formal tryout process. The player's history within the club and the knowledge our coaching staff has of the player will serve as their "tryout"
  - We will use our Summer 7s program (described previously) as our tryout platform for those players that are not currently part of our club and would like to join. A new player with no previous history with our club will be invited to participate in a minimum of 2 Summer 7s game nights, which will be used by coaching staff for evaluation. IF you are a current player for another NCYSA member club, we will need to speak directly regarding your tryout timetable.
  - Following commitment and/or contact with our current membership regarding the Club Renewal option, and Summer 7s evaluations for those new players interested in joining the club, we will formally name teams and begin the process of preparing for the fall, 2020
  - Ideally, without knowing when we will be back on the fields, we would begin Summer 7s on June 1<sup>st</sup> and would like to announce all WHYFC teams on Friday June 26<sup>th</sup> (3 weeks of Summer 7s to allow for new player evaluations)

# Questions about Summer Renewal Program and New Player Evaluations?

## ***How do you make teams without a tryout?***

Tryouts are one way of gathering information about players. It has always been imperfect, and we have often said as a club that 2 days of tryouts does not have the weight or significance that an entire WHYFC season has, regarding a player's evaluation. We are working hard with all of our coaches to finalize depth charts and opinions regarding all of our players. We will give the opportunity to join WHYFC in the form of a New Player Evaluation, which will be held within our Summer 7s program. The Club Renewal Program and information gathered during our 2019-20 season in addition to information gathered through New Player Evaluations will give us what we need to confidently form teams for the 2020-21 season.

## ***I have to sign up for the Club Renewal Program without knowing what team my player is going to be on?***

YES. Our job and our goal is to put players in teams where they will be set up for success. We have a Developmental Player Program that invites players 'up' into different levels of the club monthly throughout the year, allowing us to continue the evaluation process throughout the year and giving players every opportunity to 'move up the ladder' within our club. The forming of fall teams is not the end of the evaluation process, it is the beginning.

## ***I have one child in the club and another who wants to join? I also have friends that are interested in joining the program?***

Your player in the club will be automatically involved in the Summer 7s schedule (described previously). Your child who has not been a part of the club will need to register for New Player Evaluations and work with directors to confirm at least two Summer 7s days that he/she is able to attend for evaluation. WHYFC will be in touch with every player who registers in New Player Evaluations. Both these situations come at no cost.

## ***What if I want to play and can't participate in Summer 7s?***

If you are in the club, recommit to the club via the Club Renewal Program and you will be placed on a team based on the club and coach knowledge of you in the 2019-20 season. If you are new to the club but cannot be a part ANY of the Summer 7s evaluations, we will have to work with the player/family to find some time for a player to be evaluated. The Summer 7s will likely give us 8 days of games where we can evaluate so we hope that new players can attend at least one of these nights.

## ***Who will my coach be next season?***

Coaching assignments and bios of each coach will be released no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>. Your age group coaches will be identified to each player within the age group, and these coaches will be your possible coaches as you enter the summer. Your team assignment at the end of June will determine who your coach is.

# WHYFC Pathways, Leagues, and Fees 2020-21

*Youth soccer is going through some massive changes at the moment. U.S. Soccer who recently supported a boys and girls Development Academy league has recently pulled its funding and closed these leagues. This doesn't effect us directly, but it has effected us indirectly. Our player pathway slides help explain our development pathway, club-wide organization, and what leagues, commitment levels, etc. that WHYFC is a part of and supports.*

*A main change is the addition of ECNL Regional Leagues on both the boys and girls side of the club. ECNL Regional League play will replace NCYSA state play for our 'white' level teams in U13 – U19 age groups.*

*Prior to COVID-19, staff was working to clean up club fees and make it easier for all to understand. Full explanation of club fees is included in following slides.*



**THE YMCA / WHYFC PATHWAY**

## **ECNL and NCYSA CLASSIC (U13-U19):**

Players, age 13 – 18. The Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) and our teams that participate in this league serve as the highest level of our club. WHYFC will have two teams per age group U13-U19 that are a part of the ECNL. Players who make and participate in the ECNL program have displayed high level talent and many of the players who participate in the ECNL have ambitions to play college soccer. WHYFC is one of only 4 clubs in the State of NC to have been admitted into this prestigious national league. The North Carolina Youth Soccer Association is the league that our 3<sup>rd</sup> level teams in the U13-19 age groups participate in. WHYFC is the only member NCYSA club in Wilmington.

## **Juniors Developmental Program (U8-U12):**

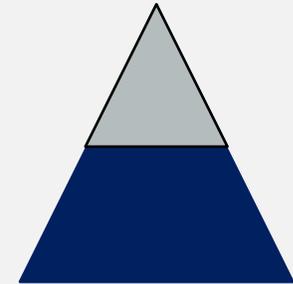
Players, ages 7 – 12, licensed coaching and developmental curriculum. The Juniors Developmental Program (JDP) is the beginning of high-level classic soccer and created for players who have shown a passion for the sport and displayed early signs of talent and ability. Players are eligible to enter the JDP at 8 years old and within the JDP are different levels and teaching techniques. JDP begins for 8 years olds as a pool training concept where the basics are focused on. At the U10 level teams begin to be formed and tactics and positions are introduced. All of the work in JDP is to prepare players to graduate onto the NCYSA and ECNL programs.

## **Southeastern NC YMCA Recreational Soccer (U4-U18):**

Recreational / Grassroots

Estimated 4,000 registrants annually. This is the introduction to soccer that includes volunteer coaching, 1x a week practices. Recreational soccer is convenient for families, includes local games focused on fun and enjoyment of the sport. This is the foundation of our player pathway, the recreational programs and the work that the YMCA and volunteer coaches do is vital to the health of the club.

# OLDER BOYS AND GIRLS PROGRAMMING (U13-U19):



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## ECNL NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS

The ECNL league includes the highest level of talent in the country and requires the highest level of commitment. WHYFC players who have earned a spot on these prestigious teams will be on a pathway that will give them an opportunity to play college soccer. WHYFC ECNL National League teams will compete inside the ECNL Mid-Atlantic conference and also participate in regional and national Showcase events. The Mid-Atlantic conference is built up of 16 total clubs who field teams in 6 age group ages U13-U18/19. The schedule is built so that the each game day includes games vs. the same opponent club in each of the 6 age groups. There are minor variations between the boys ECNL National League and the Girls ECNL National League to be discussed specifically.

Details of ECNL National League Program:

- Minimum of 3x a week required practices
- Teams will attend 3 National ECNL Showcases or Equivalent
- College Assistance Program (U15-19)
- Sports Science / Injury Prevention
- Mid-Atlantic Conference includes teams and travel in SC,VA, NC

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## ECNL REGIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS

The ECNL Mid-Atlantic boys and girls Regional Leagues are where WHYFC 'WHITE' level teams will participate. ECNL Regional Leagues will have the identical build up of the National League with clubs fielding teams in 6 age groups U13-19. The schedule is built so that the each game day includes games vs. the same opponent club in each of the 6 age groups, allowing for connection and Collaboration throughout the program. The WHYFC Regional League program will also serve as an identification and competition platform For WHYFC players who want to 'push' and earn opportunities with the ECNL National League team.

Details of the ECNL Regional League Program:

- Minimum of 3x a week required practices
- Teams will attend regional showcase and college scouting events
- Regional League includes ECNL member clubs in NC and SC ONLY (no VA clubs are in Regional League)

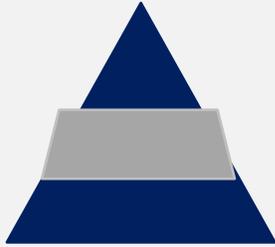
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## NCYSA STATE LEAGUE TEAMS

WHYFC Blue level teams will participate in the NCYSA state league. This established league is where many clubs throughout the state compete. WHYFC teams participating in NCYSA will have similar requirements and expectations of teams participating in ECNL Regional League Teams.

# Juniors Development Program (JDP)

(U8-U12):



**U12** Players will be placed onto tiered teams based on skill level and ability. The top level U12 team will participate in the Pre-ECNL League. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> level teams will participate in NCYSA State leagues. Each week, U12 players have 3 Team Trainings.

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**U11** There will be an expansion of NCYSA teams created at the U11 group within the JDP. Players will be placed onto tiered teams based on skill level and ability. Players not selected on teams participating in the NCYSA League, will be placed on balanced teams and also train with licensed coaches and age appropriate curriculum while playing 9v9 games. Each week, U11 players will have 1 Edge Technical Training and 2 Team Trainings.

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**U9/  
10** When appropriate, top U9/10 JDP players will be selected to play in teams participating in Classic Leagues. The majority of this group will likely be U10 players but some advanced U9s may be considered. Each week, these select U9/10 players will have 1 Edge Technical Training and 2 Team Trainings.

The majority of U9/10 JDP players will also train with licensed coaches and age appropriate curriculum while playing games with balanced teams in the local 7v7 In-House League. Boys and Girls will be separated into gender specific teams at this age. Each week, U9/10 training will include 1 Edge Technical Training, 1 Team Training and 1 Street Soccer Day.

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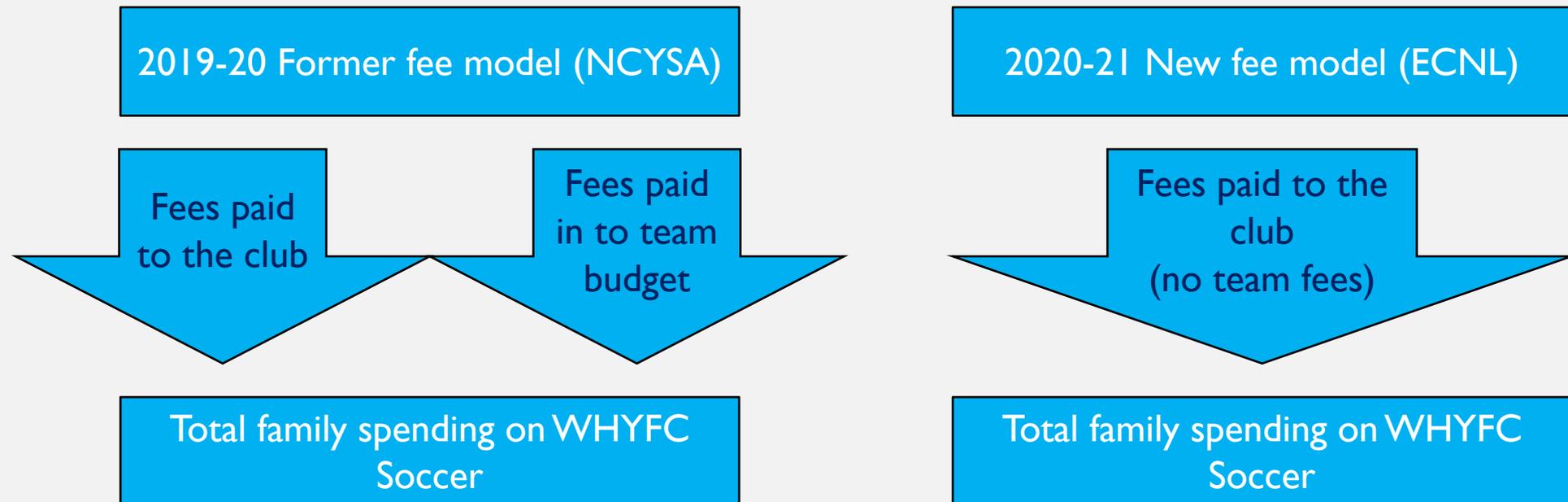
**U8** U8 is the youngest age group eligible for JDP. U8 players will train in balanced teams with licensed coaches and age appropriate curriculum. U8 JDP Teams will play in a local 5v5 In-House League. U8 JDP will be a co-ed program with boys and girls mixed throughout teams. Each week, U8 training will include 1 Edge Technical Training and 1 Team Training.

## 2020-21 CLUB FEES

- The 2019-20 Older boys were the only group within our club that had more than 50% of their season cancelled. We will be working with this group to address this. More details will follow regarding this group.
- All Older (U13-19) ECNL programming (National and Regional League) team fees are an 'all-in' price. This includes tournaments fees, coaching travel, equipment, referee fees, etc. There will be no additional fees, with the exception of individual/family travel to games/events. This is a change for many who are used to a club fee *and* a team fee. This will no longer be the case. Please see explanation on next slide
- WHYFC will be taking ALL team equipment purchases 'in-house' meaning teams/individuals will not be responsible for any additional equipment costs
- We will not have bus trips for ECNL National League teams until spring, 2020.
- Pre-COVID the club committed and chose new uniforms for our new 2-year buying cycle. As a result of economic strains, we limit required purchase to only necessity items. These items include the two new jerseys, and a pair of custom light blue shorts that were produced exclusively for the club (estimated purchase price: \$145 for U11 and above, and \$88 for U7 – U10). These uniforms will be worn for 2 full years of WHYFC soccer. If your player or your family has NB inventory of practice gear, warm ups, bags, socks, navy blue game/training shorts, all of these items can be reused moving into the fall.

# OLDER AGE GROUP (U13-19) FEE CHANGE EXPLANATION DUE TO CHANGE FROM NCYSA SCHEDULE STRUCTURE TO ECNL REGIONAL LEAGUE SCHEDULE STRUCTURE

- The most significant change in fees from 2019-20 to 2020-21 is based on the league change that U13-19 white/2<sup>nd</sup> level teams will make from NCYSA classic soccer to ECNL Regional League soccer. This change and the 'all in' schedule that it provides allows WHYFC to build a fee structure that is consistent for all 6 age groups. This consistent schedule that has all teams traveling to the same clubs for the same amount of games allows us to take in fees that were formerly 'team specific': referee fees, coaches travel, tournament fees, equipment, etc. This new fee, though higher, is an 'all in' fee that covers the entire WHYFC experience with the exception of travel (getting your player to the games).



**U15-19 ECNL REGIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS - \$1,700 (\$242 per month)**

- 3x a week practice
- Regional League Competition (NC, SC)
- Regional Showcase Events
- State and Regional Travel
- College Recruiting Support
- Sports Science / Injury prevention
- 6/7 month program

**U15-19 ECNL NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS - \$2,500 (\$312 per month)**

- 3x a week practices minimum
- National League Competition
- National Showcase Events
- Video Analysis
- College Recruiting Service
- Sports Science / Injury prevention
- State, Regional and National Travel
- 7/8 month program

**U13/14 ECNL REGIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS - \$1,900 (\$211 per month)**

- 3x a week practice
- Regional League Competition (NC, SC)
- Regional Showcase Event
- State and Regional Travel
- National event showcase
- 9 month program

**U13/14 ECNL NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS - \$2,500 (\$277 per month)**

- 3x a week practices minimum
- National League Competition
- National Showcase Events
- Sports Science / Injury prevention
- State, Regional and National Travel
- Video Analysis
- 9 month program

**U11 and U12 Boys and Girls Programming (JDP) – 9 months, \$1,240 total (\$137 per month)**

- 3x a week practices
- Team formation based on skill level
- Some in-state travel occurs
- Licensed coaches
- Age-appropriate curriculum
- Overseen by full-time program director

**U9 and U10 Boys and Girls Programming (JDP) – 9 months, \$1,040 total (\$115 per month)**

- 3x a week practices
- In-house League (limited regional travel)
- Licensed coaches
- Age-appropriate curriculum
- Led by full-time program director
- Indoor training at Edge included

**U7 and U8 Boys and Girls Programming (JDP) – 9 months, \$840 total (\$93 per month)**

- 2x a week practices
- In-house League (no travel)
- Licensed coaches
- Age-appropriate curriculum
- Led by full-time program director
- Indoor training at Edge included

# RETURN TO PLAY

## *BEST CASE SCENARIO*

**May 15<sup>th</sup>:**

Club Renewal Program launched – this allows for current members to commit to 2020-21 Hammerheads soccer

**June 1<sup>st</sup>:**

WHYFC to launch 'Summer 7's' – a 7 week program that will get WHYFC players back on the field

**June 1 – 26:**

First 4 weeks of Summer 7's that also functions as the evaluation /tryout period for new players interested in joining the club

**June 27<sup>th</sup>:**

WHYFC teams to be announced for the 2020-21 season.

**July 6 – 23:**

Second half of Summer 7's program with all WHYFC players participating in summer league play

**August 10<sup>th</sup>:**  
Beginning of fall, 2020 season preparation