



CHICAGO FIRE NEWS RELEASE

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Chicago Fire Youth Development Program Update

Chicago Fire Juniors U17's in Spain to Train With Deportivo Alaves

Fire Juniors - West Michigan Reaches State Cup Final, Takes Top Prizes in KISS Tournament

Fire Juniors – Elm Grove Wins 2006 Wisconsin State Championship

CHICAGO, IL (Tuesday, July 11, 2006) – The Chicago Fire Youth Development Program continues to grow young talent at all levels, as the program competed successfully in area tournaments and took home top honors. The Fire Juniors youth club is making waves both at home and around the globe, as the Chicago Fire Juniors (CFJ) U17 Boys side is currently in Vitoria, Spain for a 10-day training period with Deportivo Alaves, while the CFJ - West Michigan and CFJ – Elm Grove (WI) both garnered State Cup titles in their respective states.

Fire Juniors U17's En Espana

From July 6 – 16, the Chicago Fire Juniors U17 Boys will train and play exhibitions in Vitoria, Spain as guests of Spanish First Division side Deportivo Alaves. Fire Juniors players are training with youth players from Alaves and will play matches against other clubs from nearby Spanish cities. Two CFJ U18 players will also have an opportunity to train with the Alaves First Division side while the squad is in camp across the pond.

Chicago Fire Juniors Give and Receive This Summer

The Chicago Fire Juniors busy off-season in the community this summer included special recognition in Wheaton's annual Independence Day parade last week. The CFJ have also partnered recently with the Madison School in Wheaton for an upcoming crayon rescue drive. Juniors players will collect crayons that will later be melted down into "super crayons" that are more easily held by disabled children. Whole or new crayons are accepted and will be sorted and donated to underprivileged school children through the program. The CFJ has also begun planning for the 4th Annual Chicago Fire Juniors Coat Drive, to be held this October. Over the past three years, the CFJ has collected and donated more than 2,500 coats that have been distributed throughout Chicagoland.

CFJ – West Michigan Reaches State Cup Final

The Chicago Fire Juniors – West Michigan U18 Boys, coached by Jeff Merritt, became the first CFJ-WM team to reach the Michigan State Cup final, but their bid for the title fell short after falling 3-1 to Michigan Wolves. As a result of the second place finish, the side was awarded a wild card place in the regional tournament. At regionals, CFJ - WM tied the Wisconsin State Champion, 1-1, before falling to the Missouri State Champion (4-3) and the Indiana State Champion (2-1).

Elm Grove Wins Wisconsin State Championship

Chicago Fire Juniors – Elm Grove U17 Boys were recently crowned Wisconsin State Cup champions, finishing second in their regional group level with a 2-1-0 record. This year's state title marks the second Wisconsin State Cup championship for a CFJ –EG squad in three years.

Fire Juniors Boys U17 and U16 Teams Go Undefeated in Kalamazoo

The Chicago Fire Juniors are proud to announce their Boys U17 and U16 teams won soundly over the competition at the Kalamazoo Invitational Soccer Showcase (KISS) throughout the weekend of June 16-18 in Kalamazoo, MI. Both teams ran the field at KISS – one of the premier college showcase events in the Midwest – without losing a single match on the way to their championships.

Chicago Fire Juniors - West Michigan Rock KISS

The CFJ – West Michigan U17 Boys team won the top bracket at the prestigious KISS Tournament, going undefeated and beating NWI United from Indiana 2-1 in the final. This rounds off a great season for the CFJ – WM U17's, who also won the Best of the Midwest tournament and the Michigan Premier Division, while also reaching the semifinals of the Michigan State Cup.

Elm Grove Completes Tryouts

Tryouts were completed for Chicago Fire Juniors – Elm Grove at the beginning of June and the club is pleased to announce that record numbers were generated at most age levels. Overall, numbers were up and several new teams were formed to accommodate the high demand. CFJ-EG will field 10 Boys teams and 12 Girls teams for the 2006/07 campaign.

Fire Juniors – Mississippi Sends Five Teams to Regionals

The Chicago Fire Juniors - Mississippi recently sent five teams to compete at the Region 3 Regionals held on June 26 in Little Rock, AR. The five competing squads were the Boys U14 side and Girls U16, U17, U18 and U19 teams.

CFJ – WM Impress at 7-Eleven Classic in Saginaw

Congratulations go out to the Chicago Fire Juniors – West Michigan participants that took part in the 7-Eleven Soccer Classic, held June 23-25 in Saginaw, MI. Both the CFJ – WM U17 Boys and U11 Girls took home top prize in the tournament, while the U10 Boys won their initial bracket and the U11 Boys earned a spot in the finals.

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