



The launch of the Chicago Fire Academy (CFA) is one of the most important initiatives for the advancement of professional soccer and MLS in the Chicago market. With a successful team on the field and a first class stadium to call home, the Fire is positioned to make a critical investment in Player Development.

The Chicago Fire Academy will provide an elite player development environment designed to identify and develop the best young talent within the **Chicagoland** area, with the ultimate goal of developing the next top professional player.

# Player Development in Chicago



The forward-thinking local soccer leaders need to develop a mutual understanding and agreement on what is required to increase the quality of elite player development in the local area. With the creation of the U.S. Soccer Development Academy League, the Federation has provided a framework for this development.

The collective challenge is to raise the level of play at all age groups and ultimately develop more elite players. Player development at all levels needs to improve and this is the challenge for every Club and coach involved in youth soccer locally.

Zone 1 – Base Level: Ages 6 – 12

Zone 2 – Growth Level: Ages 13 – 17

Zone 3 – Elite Level: Above age 17

As the local professional team, the Chicago Fire is responsible for being a leader in helping cultivate advancement of the game at all levels. The Fire will play a direct role in Player Development with programs in each Zone, and will be proactively supportive of all other local soccer programs.

The goal of the Chicago Fire is **NOT** to become a “Super Club.”

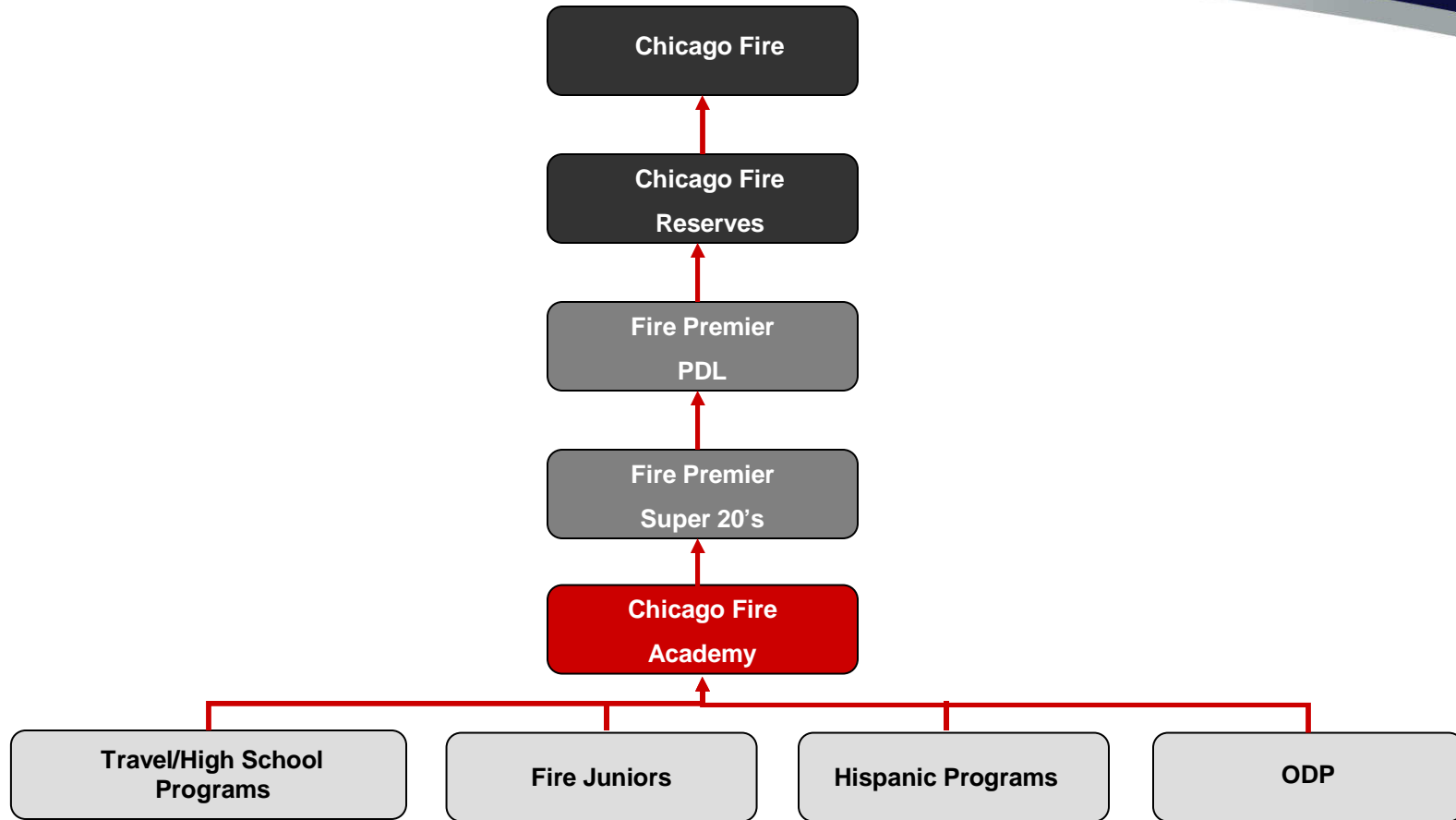
# Chicago Fire Programs



<b>Zone 3</b>	<p>Fire Premier PDL U-23</p> <p>Fire Premier Super 20's</p>	<b>Ages 17 +</b>
<b>Zone 2</b>	<p>Chicago Fire Academy</p>	<b>Ages 13 - 17</b>
<b>Zone 1</b>	<p>Chicago Fire Jr's</p>	<b>Ages 6-12</b>

The Chicago Fire is the only MLS Team to have programs at all levels

# The Academy - Path To The Pros



# Home Grown Talent Identification



Players in the Chicago Fire Academy will potentially be eligible to be added to the MLS/Chicago Fire Home grown talent identification list.

Players on this list will benefit from the opportunity to be signed directly by the Chicago Fire, as opposed to entering the adidas SuperDraft and Supplemental Draft where they could be selected by any MLS Team.

This rule is designed to provide increased opportunities for local players. Local players can realize the aspirational goal of playing professionally for their local team and Team's can strengthen the connection with the local community.

For players to be listed on an MLS Home Grown Talent roster they must meet certain training standards:

- U-18 & U-16 = 100 days training/games per year

The Chicago Fire may sign up to 2 players each year from its Home Grown Talent list to either Senior or Developmental contracts. Once 2 players have been signed, all other players will be available to other MLS Teams, but a Team cannot lose more than 2 players in any year.

# Mission Statement



## To identify and develop talented and aspiring youth soccer players in to top professional players

The Chicago Fire Academy (CFBA) will be based on five core principles:

**1. Identify**

Creation of focused and committed initiatives to identify players from all diverse communities

**2. Develop**

Emphasis on individual training and player development rather than winning games and tournaments.

**3. Talented**

Exclusive and limited focus on the most talented young players. Only 44 players will be invited to the Academy

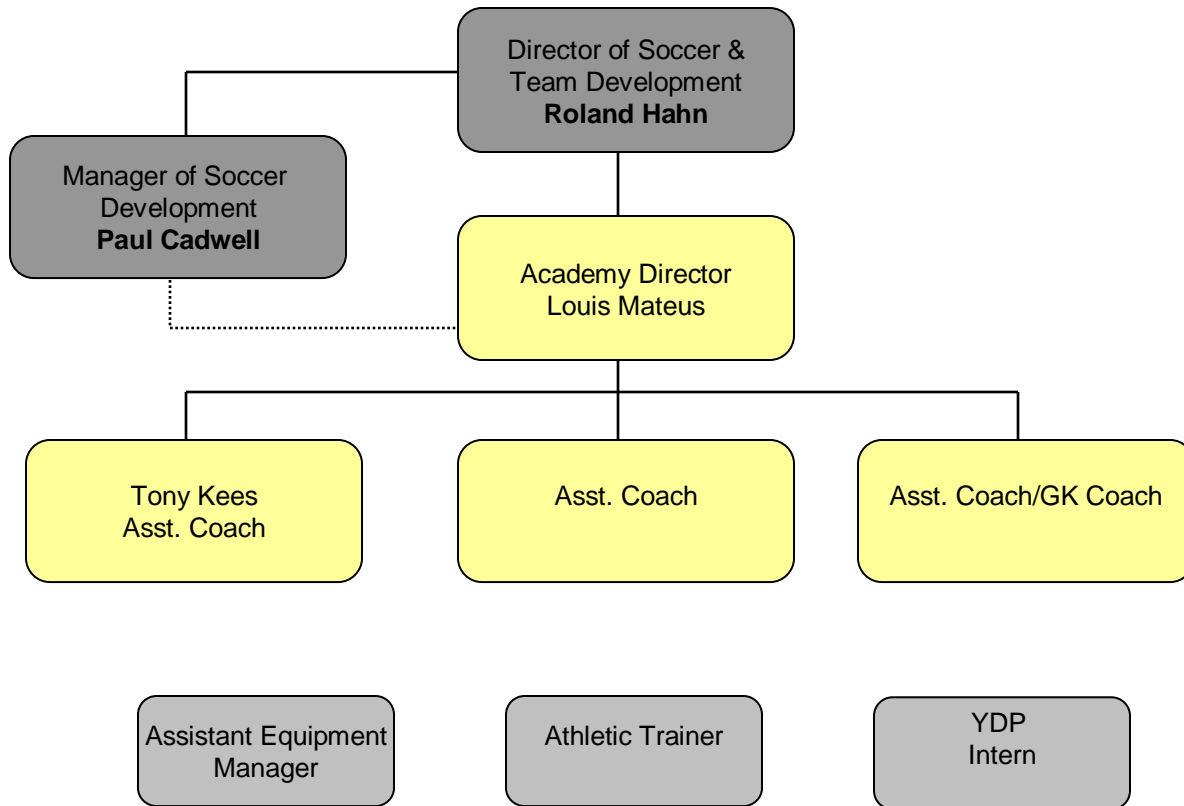
**4. Aspiring**

Players must have the self desire to want to become an exceptional player

**5. Professional**

Program success will be defined by the number of players who become professional players

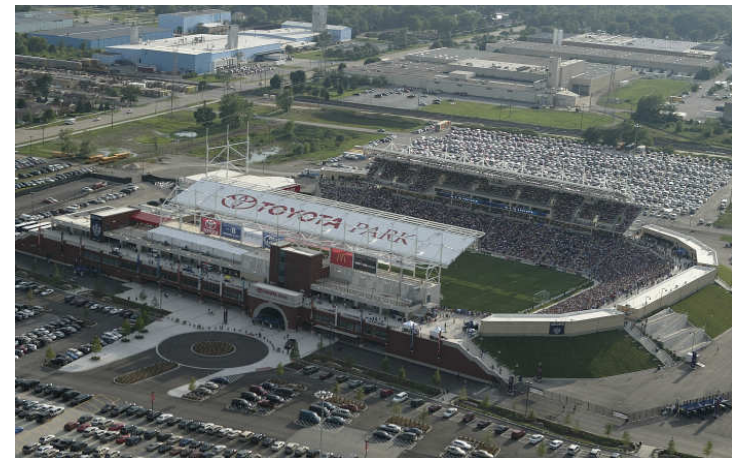
# Staffing



# Facilities



- Home for the Academy will be Toyota Park
- Facilities include:
- Professional locker rooms
- Controlled access to first team amenities
  - i) Weight room
  - ii) Training room
  - iii) Media room
  - iv) Players lounge
  - v) Sports therapy clinic
  - vi) Video / Game analysis room
- Quality outdoor fields located at Toyota Park



# Player Identification



The Chicago Fire Academy will not be a “Club” as generally understood. The forty (44) players will be part of an “Academy pool” and will train together as a group. Players from age 14 to 18 yrs may be part of the Academy.

From the pool of players the Academy will field two teams, a U-16 team and a U-18 team. Players may play up if appropriate.

Recruiting principles are an extremely important aspect of the Academy. Players will come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The only criteria considered will be (a) playing ability and potential, and (b) desire to become a professional athlete.

A specific emphasis will be placed on developing scouting and recruiting programs for the underserved local ethnic communities.

Excellent communication on the opportunity and expectations of participation must take place in advance and in the appropriate manner with existing clubs and parents/guardians.

Each player will be expected to adhere to a specific set of written expectations as it relates to all aspects of the Program, including, but limited to: practice and game commitments, academic performance expectations, personal conduct, athlete development.

# Player Instruction and Competition



The emphasis of the Academy will be on providing a high level regular training and development environment designed for the elite player.

Players will train 3-4 times per week and will participate exclusively in the U.S. Soccer Development Academy League as part of a U-16 or U-18 team. The League will involve 32-28 games per year including a Academy Finals tournament at the Home Depot Center each year.

Players do not participate in any other soccer programs, except High School soccer in 2007.

The Chicago Fire Academy will train year round at Toyota Park under the direction of top coaches.

Development curriculum will be focused on individual player development and skill progression. Games will be an important part of the development process, however, winning matches will not be the ultimate goal of the program.

The Academy will offer a professional experience and environment, with high expectations and standards both on and off the field. All aspects of being a professional player will be incorporated into the program including strength and conditioning, mental preparation, nutritional management, match and video analysis, etc.

The Academy will be integrated with the Chicago Fire first team in an controlled and appropriate manner.

**Participation in the Academy will be at no cost to all players and will not jeopardize NCAA eligibility.**