

What is Academy Soccer?

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Developmental Soccer



WHAT IS ACADEMY SOCCER?

A "Soccer Academy" is a group of Under 8 through Under 10 **recreational players** who desire to participate with other players without following the recreational team formation rules. These players will be required to be on a Jr. Legends Recreational League team.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ACADEMY SOCCER?

- To provide recreational players who have aspirations of becoming a more accomplished player an avenue to test and enhance his or her skills.
- To provide recreational players an opportunity to train with experienced coaches.
- To provide recreational players an opportunity to investigate the level of play with which they are comfortable, which players they would like to play with, and for which coaches they would like to play.

*** Academy play will be used as an additional league for the recreational player, not to replace the recreational team your child plays with.*

HOW IS ACADEMY SOCCER DIFFERENT THAN RECREATIONAL SOCCER?

1. TEAM FORMATION

RECREATIONAL SOCCER - formed by grouping players randomly on a team each season.

ACADEMY TEAMS – There are no teams, and there is no league play. The approach of the Academy program is a "Festival"-type training environment, where all players train together, and then participate in game play at the end of the training session. The Academy does not select or exclude players. Enrollment is open to any child that meets the age requirements, wants to learn soccer the right way and of course... and wants to have fun while they're doing it!

2. FEES

RECREATIONAL SOCCER — a seasonal registration fee and uniform fee; individual player equipment.

ACADEMY SOCCER— The Academy Club Fees include a Training Shirt, skills session fees and home association player registration fees. Tournament or festival fees may be extra.

3. PLAYING TIME

RECREATIONAL SOCCER—coaches bound by the 50% playing rule (provided player regularly attends practices).

ACADEMY SOCCER— coaches not bound to 50% playing rule, but we will do our best based on attendance.

4. COACHES

RECREATIONAL SOCCER—volunteer coaches.

ACADEMY SOCCER—licensed coaches.

5. GAME AND PRACTICE LOCATIONS

RECREATIONAL SOCCER—all practices are conducted on Germantown Parks and Recreation fields. Some games may be played on 'near by' fields, close to and in the Germantown area.

ACADEMY SOCCER—practice sessions will be on Germantown fields, while games can or may be anywhere in the Germantown area, depending on Academy opponent your (age) group is playing.



WHY ARE ACADEMY PROGRAMS SO SUCCESSFUL?

- **Trainer-to-player ratio** is top priority for the Academy. Individual attention to each player boosts development.
- **Small-sided games** give each player maximum touches on the ball
- **One-on-one soccer training** gives the player confidence to use these skills in simulated game situations.
- **Having fun in a pressure-free environment** makes players that love the game for life!

ACADEMY PHILOSOPHY.

The exciting thing to see in our Academy Program is the fact that we are all playing out the back, and only punting when needed. We have to learn to play out the back in difficult and challenging times and not just in the easy games; otherwise, our players and teams will not learn how to play out the back under pressure. Academy coaches will focus on development now and winning later.

Even when others focus on team winning more than an individual child's development, we stick by the right way and develop the individual. The age to develop the individual and learn is most important in the Academy.

The main objective of the Academy is to promote and emphasize the **technical abilities** of young soccer players; at this age mainly **Dribbling Skills** or **Ball Mastery**.

Why Dribbling Skills? Dribbling is the foundation for all the other fundamental skills of soccer, such as controlling the ball, passing and shooting. It takes years to become a comfortable and confident dribbler. Players have to learn to combine body control, agility, coordination and balance with the mechanics of dribbling, and the sooner they start the better. Trainers will use a range of age-appropriate training activities and techniques to maximize a player's touches on the ball, including small-sided games that foster skill development, as well as imaginative, creative play. The Ball Mastery program will help foster **confidence, creativity and composure** during game play.

SKILL PRIORITIES

- Dribble out of trouble
- Soft first touch on the ball
- No kicking allowed except when finishing on the goal

THE ACADEMY PROGRAM PROVIDES

1. Ball Mastery sessions that emphasizes the importance of individual technique
2. Team Training sessions led by a professional trainer
3. Small-sided games against other area Academy teams that are observed and mediated by a professional trainer
4. More touches on the ball, more passes attempted, more 1v1s attempted
5. A good introduction to 'Select' competitive soccer for players transitioning from recreational to select soccer.

WHAT AGE DIVISIONS MAY PARTICIPATE IN ACADEMY SOCCER?

U7 & U8— Under 7 and 8 players may participate with Academy teams for one practice only per week and may or may not compete in any games (league, tournament, or scrimmage games).



U9 & U10— Academy players are limited to one (1) practice per week with each of their academy teams. Academy players may only play in one (1) academy game per week or one Academy Festival, except tournaments.

CAN MY CHILD PLAY RECREATIONAL SOCCER AND ACADEMY SOCCER AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes! As a matter of fact, Academy is designed to *supplement* the recreational soccer experience, not *replace* it. Academy players must be on a Germantown Junior Legends Recreational League team in order to participate in the Germantown Academy Program.

IS ACADEMY SOCCER RIGHT FOR MY CHILD AND FAMILY?

This is a question only a parent can answer by asking yourself a few basic questions:

- Is this what my child wants? Or is this what I want?
- Is my child passionate about soccer?
- Are my child's soccer skills consistently above average?
- Am I willing to adjust my expectations from the recreational soccer experience to the Academy experience?

WINNING vs. DEVELOPMENT

At the end of the day, all players, parents, coaches want to win. However, we believe that focusing on player development through proper training and providing a positive environment for our players to play in is more important than the win – loss record.

All players will be encouraged to compete at their highest level possible, and will be challenged to play the game of soccer the proper way regardless of the win – loss outcome.

We believe that with sound technical, tactical, physical and psychological skills encouraged through a developmental 'process' oriented philosophy, players will gain the necessary tools to maximize their potential and ultimately reach their goals through life.

ACADEMY REGISTRATION

1. All players participating in Academy must first register online in the appropriate Germantown Jr. Legends Recreation Soccer program.
2. Players registered to a Germantown Jr. Legends recreational team pay an additional Academy registration fee per (Fall and Spring) season. Registration for the Academy Program is done online at www.GermantownLegendsSoccer.com.

A FEW IMPORTANT RULES TO REMEMBER ABOUT ACADEMY PARTICIPATION

1. All players participating in a Germantown Legends Academy who are also registered with a youth recreational team shall, in the event of a conflict, consider their recreational team, recreational plus (or Advanced Rec.) team to be their primary team, and the Academy team as a secondary commitment.
2. Although some coaches will encourage a player to play academy only, that is NOT the intent of the Academy concept. Academy league play will not be scheduled during regular recreational play times.



WHY THE GERMANTOWN LEGENDS

BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

At the Germantown Legends, it is one Coach, one team. Your son or daughter will have the same Coach at both practices as well as games.

BEST FIELDS IN THE AREA

We have some of the finest and safest fields in the area, all with lighting and convenient restrooms. No fighting for training time and space in Germantown.

PLAY LESS, PRACTICE MORE

The Legends concentrate on developing the player through our team training sessions that focus on individual skill development and tactical awareness, as well as our Excel skill and agility workouts and small sided games. Our goal is to develop players and that requires touches on the ball, building confidence and a not afraid to fail attitude. We want to give them the tools they need to move on to the next level.

The Legends believe in getting the ratio right, three practices to every one game throughout the season. This allows for 'balance' in the lives of our players and their families, while also nurturing the player's passion and respect for the game (i.e. Soccer should be FUN!).

TOUCHES, TOUCHES, TOUCHES AND MORE TOUCHES

In order to rapidly progress their technical and tactical skills, players need to touch the ball ... a lot. For most, using feet is not as natural as using hands. And using one's left foot is not as natural as using one's right (unless you're a leftie of course). Therefore, the only way to improve in "The Beautiful Game" is to get a lot of touches on the ball. It's really that simple. For our younger players this means participating in small-sided games of 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4. For our older players, it means NOT packing our team rosters to the league allowable limits. After all, fewer players means more touches per player per game ... and that's exactly what we want.

NO TOURNAMENTS TO FILL

By focusing solely on the player, we 'reduce' the need to play in excessive amounts games and unnecessary travel. Players need quality rest, just as much as they need to play the game. Kids need to recover between games,.. allowing for the body to grow and muscle recovery (i.e. less injuries, more quality play, etc.).

COMPLETE SOCCER CLUB

The Germantown Legends are a complete soccer program, operating under a Municipal Service Provider Agreement with the City of Germantown. We have a place for every young soccer player in your family to play!

1. **HappyFeet**, for the beginner, ages 2-1/2 to 5 years of age
2. **TOPSoccer**
3. **Future Legends**, recreational soccer with instruction for ages 5- 10
4. **Jr. Legends**, recreational soccer program for ages 11 to 19
5. **Legends Academy**, for those wanting to transition from recreational to competitive soccer
6. **Legends 'Competitive' Soccer**, ages 9 to 19



COACHES COME TO GET LICENSED IN GERMANTOWN

Over the past several years, both the City of Germantown and the Germantown Legends have hosted several coaching courses in conjunction with the Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA), Youth Module, USSF E, USSF D and the USSF National Youth License.

BRAVE, CREATIVE LEADERS FOR LIFE

The Germantown Legends intensely focuses on creating brave, creative leaders for life. Our no guilt, no shame, no blame philosophy gives kids the confidence to get out of their comfort zone and create the big play in any situation.

We believe that if a young player wants to learn how to play soccer the right way, the way that will prepare them for the future, the Germantown Legends will always be the right choice.

**For additional information, please be sure to visit our website,
www.GermantownLegendsSoccer.com.**

