

Chattanooga Red Wolves and Knoxville Reds FC Announce Strategic Partnership to Offer New Player Pathway Opportunities and Elite Competition



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHATTANOOGA, TN (August, 27, 2020) –The Chattanooga Red Wolves and Knoxville Reds FC announced today a strategic partnership, beginning this fall, to provide players in the two clubs definitive pathways to high level competition in a positive, player-centric environment. In addition, the alignment will allow more players from both clubs access to be seen and scouted, regardless of location or financial resources.

The immediate future will see the Red Wolves and Reds form "super teams" among various female age groups that will compete in one high level showcase tournament each season. Super team options include tournaments like the USL Academy Cup in Tampa, FL, The Jefferson Cup in Richmond, VA, and the Adidas Creator Cup with location TBA.

The super teams will be an additional opportunity for players and families from both organizations and will not conflict with current team structures. Tournaments will take place on weekends when players would otherwise have the weekend off. Directors will also ensure a fair and honest selection process will take place through inter club games and training to make sure that the correct players go to these events and represent themselves and the organization.

Older players selected for the super teams will also be provided an opportunity to train and play with the Red Wolves WPSL women's amateur team, the reigning Southeast Conference Champions. The WPSL team is made up of current and former collegiate players and aspiring professional players. Approximately 40% of the current NWSL women's professional league spent time playing in the WPSL.

Derek Greene, Knoxville native and longtime SEC women's soccer Coach serves as the Executive Vice President of the Red Wolves Academy. "This is a tremendous opportunity to bring the Knoxville and Chattanooga communities together in a manner which will benefit everybody involved," said Greene. "The players are the ones that will benefit the most and that is what this is about and who this is for going forward."

Luke Winter, Red Wolves VP of Youth and Director of Coaching had this to say, "There have been some talented females over the years from each of these markets and the ability to bring the best players together on a more consistent basis will change the path for these players. The Red Wolves and Reds philosophies and visions for the growth of female soccer in our region align and this is a huge step forward for players." Winter is also the Head Men's Coach at Tennessee Wesleyan University.

"The work being done for the growth of soccer, elite talent identification, and player development in the eastern and southeastern parts of Tennessee is taking a tremendous step forward today," said Chattanooga Red Wolves President and advisor Chad Mize. "The Reds have done a wonderful job in the greater Knoxville region of finding and developing players the right way. The combination of these two organizations is a fantastic move to raise the level of competition for our players locally, regionally, and nationally."

Red Wolves and Reds players will also have access to top level coaches from both Chattanooga and Knoxville, player ID clinics, and the chance to be part of a professionally run academy structure tied to the Red Wolves organization, which is one of the fastest growing soccer organizations in the country.

In addition to the girls' offerings, members of the Reds boys' teams will now have a pathway to participate in ECNL and at the professional level if they choose to tryout and compete as part of the Red Wolves Academy. The Red Wolves First Team plays in USL League One, which is the official Third Division of professional soccer in the US. The Red Wolves Boys Academy were recently selected into boys ECNL and will begin their first games in the new league this month.

Derrick Long, Director of Coaching for the Knoxville Reds, "The vision of the Knoxville Reds FC has always been to expand player pathways and create opportunities for our club members to play at the highest level possible. The partnership with the Red Wolves is a huge step in that direction."

As a long time, Knoxville native and former SEC Women's Soccer Player for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Reds FC Board President, Tori Watson, understands firsthand the importance of expanding access and opportunities to players across the state of Tennessee. "As we take our next step in the growth of soccer in-and-around our community, we are incredibly excited about our partnership with the Chattanooga Red Wolves," said Watson. "Over the past year, the Knox Reds organization has worked tirelessly to find the perfect fit to continue our momentum. This collaboration further signifies our desire to provide all players in our club, regardless of gender or ability, with the inspiration and structure to continue to advance in the game. We now have continuous steps in the development pyramid so that our players can aspire to reach the highest level of play."

The Red Wolves and Knoxville Reds will officially commemorate their partnership during Chattanooga Red Wolves SC match against Greenville Triumph on Saturday, September 19. Kick-off is set for 1:00 p.m. ET and will be played at CHI Memorial Stadium.