



FAYETTEVILLE
Soccer Club

Press Release

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VILLARREAL
Club de Fútbol

For Immediate Release:

Fayetteville Soccer Club Force (Fayetteville, NC) and Villarreal Club de Fútbol (Villarreal, Spain) have come to an Agreement in Principle to Partner in a Soccer Developmental Pathway Project in Fayetteville, NC

The Fayetteville Soccer Club Force (Fayetteville, NC) and Villarreal Club de Fútbol (Villarreal, Spain) have come together to create a project intended to generate a new pathway of success for soccer players and their families in Fayetteville, NC and the United States.

The purpose of the agreement is to create a parallel system of development in Fayetteville, NC to that of the system currently administered in Villarreal, Spain. Through coaching education, ideologies, methodologies, and cross-over developmental models, the partnership will allow players here in the United States, and Spain alike, to be able to be developed and assessed for a higher level of play in both countries.



During the upcoming months, the two clubs will look to finalize the agreement and be 100% on task by August 1, 2018.

When asked what it means for the club, Director of Soccer at FSC, Todd Abbey, had this to say:

“It means everything. It enhances the value of what we already give to our families at the Force, and creates a pathway of success rarely seen here in the States. You have a lot of clubs in the United States tied to clubs from around the world. Some through 3rd parties, some directly, but more on a camps, branding and marketing front. This one is different. Our team here in Fayetteville that has been a part of the conversations, has made sure of that.”

Abbey went on to say, “From the very first communication, we were consistent that it had to be different. It had to be real. I have been in the youth soccer development world for close to 20

years, and have seen and been a part of every level in one way or another. For me personally, there would be no agreement unless Villarreal could prove it was a true path of success for our players.”

In order to find that sense of “real”, the first step was for each organization to get a first-hand view and understanding of each other’s operations.

In October of 2017, two representatives from Villarreal CF visited the Fayetteville SC Force at Jordan Soccer Complex. Juan Antón De Salas (Villarreal CF Director del Área Internacional) and Brandon Páramo, came to meet with the Force and overlook training sessions at the Complex.

"Villarreal is one of Europe's top development programs in professional soccer, but our club is also all about giving back to society through sports. We consider our own Academy as the secret of our success, having managed to go from 0 to a world class club in only 20 years, playing in UEFA competitions 15 times and still holding the record of best debut team ever in the Champions League. This success only works with the help of the community. When coming to North Carolina we were looking for the ideal partner, someone that could be on the same page as Villarreal regarding passion for soccer and a city with a strong sense of community that shared our same values. We have found that in Fayetteville and we are happy to see this project coming together. We have seen other European clubs coming to the US with a different approach. It has taken more time for us because we wanted to be ready. We wanted to be able to leave our footprint in another organization, provide value for a different community and share our love for this beautiful game and its players. We are ready now." - Juan Antón De Salas

"I believe that the key to success for a project like this is to work on all the details. Sharing our expertise and ideas and transferring them to Fayetteville is going to be challenging as we come from a different country and culture, but we have found a great organization that shares our vision of sports for the local community, for the development of not only players but everyone. We believe in our project that has proven to be one of the most successful on and off the field, developing many professional players over the years and running one of the leading Corporate Responsibility Programs in professional soccer in Spain." - Brandon Páramo

A couple months after the Villarreal visit to Fayetteville, Abbey and FSC Director of Operations, Adrian McConnell, made their way over to Spain for a 7 day stay to assess training sessions, meet with Villarreal coaching staff & psychologists, and ultimately decide whether the two clubs were a good fit. When asked his thoughts, McConnell stated, "This would be a perfect fit for our area because their methodology suits the players in our community. Both club’s (FSC and Villarreal) philosophies are geared towards a player centric environment, which provides players the potential to develop to their maximum both on and off the field."

Lastly, with this agreement and forming the parallel pathways, the focus is not totally on the youth side of the project. One of the most important aspects to Director Abbey is to start formulating the professional path here in Fayetteville, NC.

“Fayetteville as a city is ready for professional soccer. I am sure as many people have read in local media that there is very positive interest in bringing professional soccer here already. This makes what we are doing even bigger in the grand scheme. With our ability and contacts on our level, and the interest already shown, bringing an organization like Villarreal CF here will only make our area more attractive. We are looking to build in phases. Not try and bring everything all at once. So our goal to start on the Professional level will be with a Pre-professional PDL team.”

PDL is “the proven developmental leader in North American soccer's evolving tiered structure, the Premier Development League features 74 franchises in four conferences throughout the United States and Canada, including 18 clubs that are owned and operated by a professional club, or that hold a partnership with a professional club. The PDL has proven to be an important stepping-stone for top professionals now playing throughout the world, with more than 70 percent of all MLS selections since 2010 having PDL experience, including 66 selections in the 2018 MLS SuperDraft. The PDL season consists of 14 regular season matches for each team, seven home and seven away, and provides elite collegiate players the opportunity to taste a higher level of competition while maintaining their eligibility. In addition to league play, PDL teams compete in the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup as well as various exhibitions.” - <https://www.uslpdl.com/about>

Joel Nash (Director, Business Development for United Soccer Leagues (USL)) added his thoughts about the project;

“You have to be excited when you have an elite international professional club not just forging a partnership found in licensing or branding, but in true player talent and nurturing. The value that professional soccer clubs are seeing in the roots all across America is exciting, and I’m thrilled to see how Villarreal has chosen Fayetteville to forge a lasting opportunity. The Premier Development League has been keen to follow this relationship, and when the time is right, have a team provide that key bridge from the youth amateur realm to the American professional level and beyond. PDL would give this partnership a chance to gauge its player development against the elite across North America.”

Ultimately, the overall goal is to establish the following path of development:

Ages 3-6: Developmental and Fundamental

Ages 7-10: Youth Academy

Ages 11-17: Full Academy

Ages 18-19: 19U Academy, Senior Teams

Ages 20-23: First and Reserve teams (USL PDL and 2nd / 3rd Tier Squads)

In his final statements, Abbey notes, “At the end of the day, we want to make sure this is all about the players. There will be a lot of layers and hurdles to this project that will need tons of support and backing when it comes time, but always keeping in mind the “why?”

“This is 100% a partnership of two organizations looking to grow and develop together for the purpose of true player development. That is the most important piece of the puzzle to us.”

The club will retain the Fayetteville SC Force name, continue to compete in the NCYSA/USYSA League system and will continue to offer all of the club's recreational and adult level soccer. FSC will be able to stay with NIKE as our uniform and gear provider.

For More Information, or how to get involved with the project, contact:

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<https://www.uslpdl.com>

<https://www.villarrealcf.es/en/itemlist/>

<https://vimeo.com/242949558/8b13247b33>