



GFR ELITE ACADEMY FAQs

WHAT IS THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY?

The GFR Elite Academy is our new customizable platform for developing the complete player within the team and community. Our approach entails four foundations: (1) team and personalized player development training, (2) high-level team competition, (3) personalized pathway development and support, and (4) community involvement through service. Through these four foundations, we aim to create a supportive environment for result-oriented, high-level development and opportunities for those GFR players and teams that have the motivation and skill requirements. The GFR EA is an additional offering on top of our current offerings. From a team perspective, the GFR EA will host certain teams with talent and depth to compete at a top competitive level. From the player perspective, the GFR EA will provide individual development resources and pathway counseling and opportunities.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY FROM SUCH PROGRAMS AS THE ECNL OR GA?

Simply put, the GFR Elite Academy is a club platform for boosting individual player development within the team and GFR club. The GFR EA employs a targeted process for player growth and opportunity. Programs such as ECNL and GA are external competitive platforms to which a club may be a member. The GFR EA offers a player customized approach to real player development and player opportunities for additional training, and to compete and showcase. If the player improves, the team will improve and win. We believe that 'one-size does not fit all' due to various factors including physical maturation, mental maturation, pace of development, time and interest commitment, and financial commitment. Our approach entails four foundations: (1) team and personalized player development training, (2) high-level team competition, (3) personalized pathway development and support, and (4) community involvement through service. Through these four foundations, we aim to create a supportive environment for result-oriented, high-level development and opportunities for those GFR players and teams that have the motivation and skill requirements.

The GFR Elite Academy offers a suite of resources for high-level development in your community at competitive pricing.

- Competitive game slate plus friendlies and tournaments.
- Possibility of a two co-coaches per team based on age group and team needs.
- Customized Personalized Development Training including Individual Development Plans.
- Player performance tracking technology.
- High level competition at state, regional and national levels through VPSL/ECNL RL, USYS Conference and National League, NCSL/NCSL Super League, GA, EDP, USCS State Cup, USYS State Cup, Super Y and USFF.



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- Pathways Program directed by the Director of Player Development to optimize player development, pathways and opportunities.
- College pathway and recruiting counseling.
- Professional pathway counseling.
- GFR Futsal Academy directed by Gus Donolo.
- Super Y summer league competition directed by Gus Donolo.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN MORE ABOUT THE 'CUSTOMIZATION' PIECE OF THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY?

We call the 'customization' piece Personalized Development Training or PDT. The PDT of the GFR Elite Academy entails taking a team of players and setting and accomplishing team goals while at the same time addressing the specific training needs of each player. For example, Players A, B, C, D, E, F are on the same team, all looking for the same result, but they have different strengths and weaknesses. We will identify what those strengths and weaknesses are, and develop specific programs for each of them, without affecting their team goals and performances. We believe with over two years of identification and experimentation we have come up with an exceptionally good formula.

CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT THE GFR INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) addresses the specific training needs of each player to improve. We will identify player strengths and weaknesses and develop specific training programs for each Player. The IDP and player performance tracking technology allows for progress tracking by the player, parents, and coach in a way that makes evaluation simple, seamless, and encourages a motivation and desire to improve that is player-specific driven.

HOW MUCH IS THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY?

GFR Elite Academy pricing remains competitive. There is the initial base online registration fee similar to this past year (including practice and 4 tournaments). For the customized aspects of the program there will be various price structures based on the team plan and goals and focus on individual player development needs. Team plans and goals may include futsal, state cup, participation in a second league, earned advancement to regional and national level competitions and/or the Super Y summer league. Such additional competitions, trainings and events have an additional cost. Certain other electable program features are geared toward individual improvement and will vary for each player. The club is working internally and with possible vendors to ensure that as a club, we receive the lowest rates. Pricing should be finalized and released by June.



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WHAT HAPPENS TO PLAYERS IN THE AGE GROUP WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR DO NOT QUALIFY FOR THE ELITE ACADEMY?

The goal of the club is not to alter our current competitive and recreational playing opportunities but rather add another layer of offerings with the GFR Elite Academy. GFR current or traditional offerings will continue such that there is a place for all players to participate based on their level, needs, and situation, with emphasis continuing to be placed on balancing the competitiveness with a great experience. As a club we want to make sure that the best part of each of these players days are when they show up to our fields to train and play in games. This is something we continually strive for, believe we have made tremendous advancements and will continue to identify shortcomings and make adjustments to improve player experience.

HOW DOES A PLAYER JOIN THE ELITE ACADEMY?

On the team level, it's on a case-by-case basis in determining which teams or individuals within a pooled age group should or could participate. Most Personalized Development Training programs for the individual player are available upon recommendation or request. Don't forget that the main aim of this program is meant to drive improvement and motivate, and different teams or individual selections can change from year to year

HOW MANY PRACTICES MUST A PLAYER IN THE ELITE ACADEMY ATTEND?

The GFR Elite Academy employs a 3 + 1 practice program for team specific aspects. Players must attend 3 practices with an occasional extra practice or functional training session called at coaches' discretion. Additional training opportunities may be recommended or requested. Individuals electing to participate in additional training based on recommendation or approval after request must complete the specific set of sessions required for a specific program due to the progressive nature. For example, if a player is selected and elects to do an 8-week IDP program such as speed, technique, or strength work, it is expected that the player will complete the program.

IS THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY FOR BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS?

The GFR Elite Academy is designed for the benefit of both boys and girls.

WHEN DOES THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY START?

Effective with the seasonal year 2021-2022 with the specific start date of July 1, 2021.

WHO IS ASSIGNED TO LEAD THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY PROGRAM?



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The GFR Elite Academy is led by the GFR technical staff. Executive Director Richard Shelton approved and GFR has adopted the GFR EA program. The EA Director (Rado Pletka) will work hand in hand with the Technical Director (Kurt Borel) and Assistant Technical Director (Mike DiNuzzo). Rado Pletka will also serve as the Director of Player Development & Opportunity of the GFR EA. The EA Director (Rado Pletka) will be assisted by the Assistant EA Director (Gustavo Donolo) and the Director of College Placement (Ismael Cotto).

WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC OFFERINGS OF THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY?

- Team specific assessment to evaluate level of play and introduce components or opportunities at the team level.
- Player specific evaluations across all travel teams to evaluate how to maximize each player's potential.
- Technical data trackers to measure input and output.
- Game recording and analysis for individual and team performance at certain ages and team levels.
- Performance training for injury prevention, strength, recovery, and performance.
- Specific player improvement areas such as technical, speed and agility, decision making, position specific.
- High level training recommendations.

EXPLAIN THE PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY PART OF THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY.

Our relationship with Spanish Professional Club Deportivo La Coruna as well as recent partner Real Oviedo has made it possible for players that show extra drive and improvement to be evaluated and selected for participation in professional training environments at Deportivo and additional partner clubs in Europe. While it is accepted that a small number of athletes worldwide turn pro or are capable of turning pro, our goal is to continue setting our sights and expectations higher for the players by not only pushing the limit but also increasing their experience level. There are three potential outcomes.

- A professional opportunity is a reality check on what it takes.
- Player uses it to elevate his or her level after the experience.



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- Player meets or exceeds expectations and gets on a professional player track because the talent and mentality is there. Prior to formal GFR EA launch, we have already had several players from the club spend time with professional teams with three players with official trial invitations (To be announced soon).

WHAT IS THE EXACT PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY?

The Director of Player Development & Opportunity will work with coaches, as well as, personally assess teams and players to make recommendations for participation in the GFR Elite Academy. Parents and players with specific needs can also send request or inquiries into the program inbox at eadirector@gfrsoccerclub.org.

IS THE PROGRAM FOR RECREATIONAL PLAYERS?

While it is a program for every member of the club to take advantage of, it naturally fits in with the the skilled and motivated travel player looking to continue their competitive growth and drive.

DOES THE GFR ELITE ACADEMY REPLACE THEIR TEAM ACTIVITIES OR IS IT SUPPLEMENTAL?

Certain teams based on talent and depth of the player pool and team success will be designated GFR EA teams to compete in more competitive leagues and events. It is expected that the results generated will be a direct correlation of how much time and input is put in by the individual players, groups of players, and team. The GFR Elite Academy is a supplemental program with respect to individual player development programming.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN A BIT MORE ABOUT THE IDP PART OF THE PROGRAM?

The Individual Development Plan is a personalized plan that the technical staff will develop based on each player's strengths and weaknesses. Players will primarily execute the IDP on their own time. The IDP is used to set goals and used as a self-assessment tool.

We will continue to update these FAQs as more questions and answers are available.