



THE ST. JAMES AND FC VIRGINIA JOIN FORCES TO LAUNCH ELITE YOUTH SOCCER ACADEMY

***The St. James FC Virginia Will Expose Youth Athletes to the Best-in-Class Training,
Competition and Inspirational Soccer Learning Environment In The Country***

SPRINGFIELD, Va—The St. James, the Washington region’s premier sports, wellness and entertainment destination, announced today the acquisition of FC Virginia, Northern Virginia’s foremost youth soccer and futsal organization, and the launch of The St. James FC Virginia. This partnership will provide the most comprehensive soccer development experience in the country for male and female athletes from the beginner to the advanced level.

“We are proud to align with an organization that shares our dedication to provide a deliberate and comprehensive soccer education model,” says Douglas Homer, Director of Soccer at The St. James. “With the launch of The St. James FC Virginia, we are creating a program where player development, on and off the field, is at the center of everything we do. At The St. James, we pride ourselves on providing best-in-class training, instruction and competition—all under one roof.”

The St. James FC Virginia teams will train in The St. James’ 110,000 square-foot Field House — the only indoor FIFA regulation-sized soccer pitch in the region— as well as a 8,000 square-foot High Performance Center and a 33,000 square-foot Court House for futsal instruction and match play. The St. James FC Virginia will also seek out opportunities to expand this program to Prince William and Fairfax Counties.

The Academy will offer a dedicated developmental pathway that provides players with access to a full range of Long-Term Athletic Model fundamentals, including technical skill instruction, small-group training and parent education for children and families. The Academy will offer advanced coaching in strength and conditioning, performance nutrition and leadership, as well as position-specific training for all players as part of its commitment to providing age-appropriate instruction and support for children of all ages, interests and abilities in soccer and futsal. Advanced players in the Academy will compete for regional and national titles with the goal of playing at the collegiate, professional and international levels.

This acquisition will establish the most competitive assembly of soccer coaches and educators in the region, including:

- Douglas Homer, Director of Soccer at The St. James and former Executive Director of DC Stoddert Soccer, the largest youth-dedicated organization in the District of Columbia. Homer holds an ‘A’ License from the U.S. Soccer Federation, a National Youth License, and an Advanced National Diploma from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

- Christian Cziommer, Technical Director of Elite Player Development and former owner of FC Virginia. Cziommer holds a Masters of Sports Sciences from Germany's Deutsche Sporthochschule Köln, a NSCAA Premier Diploma and UEFA A-License from The German Soccer Federation. Cziommer also serves as the Tactical Analyst and Team Performance Coach for the Washington Spirit, D.C.'s National Women's Soccer League professional team.
- Karen Kelser, Director of Tier One programs. Kelser boasts more than 25 years of coaching experience and is a U.S. Soccer Grassroots Coaching Education Instructor.
- Prior to FC Virginia, Puppione previously served as Technical Director and Director of Coaching for Cincinnati United's CUP Girls program and helped found the Cincinnati Development Academy. He has been an assistant coach and scout with the US Soccer Youth National Teams for multiple years and is a coaching education instructor. Puppione has his USSF "A" License, United Soccer Coaches Premier and Director of Coaching Diplomas, and is completing the first ever US Soccer Girls Academy Director Course. He has a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Alabama.
- Bruce Murray, Director of Player Development and Parent Engagement. Murray, a Hermann Award winner, boasts more than 20 years of coaching and professional experience, including his time as starting forward on the U.S. Men's National Soccer Team and U.S. Men's Olympic Team.

This elite leadership team, along with their dedicated staff of 30+ coaches, will work with players and families on individual performance, small group and team training with a deliberate focus on holistic development and mentorship. The Academy will focus on delivering high quality soccer and futsal instruction, mentoring and support services for players, teams, coaches and families – all of which align with best practices and utilize evidence-based player development methods of training, coaching and evaluation.

“We are thrilled to find a new home at The St. James, where our players will have access to the best in professional-level training, equipment, and facilities,” said FC Virginia owner Christian Cziommer. “This partnership further solidifies our mission to provide the best-in-class player development and reflects our dedication to achieving excellence in every aspect of practice, play and life.”

From state-of-the-art training venues for more than 30 sports, and a full-service medspa, to the 20,000 square-foot active entertainment center and waterpark at Super Awesome & Amazing, and wellness-driven restaurant concept Vim & Victor, The St. James offers the most comprehensive combination of sports, fitness, wellness and active entertainment in the country.

The St. James FC Virginia will offer holistic soccer and futsal education programs for families in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties with The St. James serving as a home base to the Academy.

The St. James FC Virginia will hold tryouts at The St. James on Saturday, May 11 and Saturday, May 18 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to evaluate players and offer roster slots. Access registration for these events at thestjames.co/socceracademy/.

About The St. James

The St. James is the premier sports, wellness and entertainment destination brand in the country. Our mission is to maximize human potential by designing, developing and operating sports, wellness, entertainment and hospitality programs, services and experiences that engage, inspire and empower people to pursue their passions and be their best at play, at work and in life. The St. James aims to serve as the center of the universe in every community where it is located by delivering the most comprehensive combination of best-in-class sports and wellness venues, developmental and elite coaching, training and competition, five-star lifestyle experiences and family-centered active fun all in an environment that engages, inspires and delights everyone that comes through our doors. For more information, please visit thestjames.co.

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