



Matrix Soccer Academy has announced a ground breaking partnership with Baltimore based FC USA soccer club in an effort to provide a pathway for Delmarva youth players interested in collegiate athletic scholarship opportunities and potentially a professional soccer career.

The partnership will allow Watson and Matrix to continue operating throughout Delmarva and to field teams locally while providing higher level opportunities for guest playing and players capable of playing on top level FC USA teams across the bridge. Those Matrix players selected locally will be invited to attend FC USA training sessions, tryouts and player assessment sessions.

The partnership will be particularly valuable for kids looking to participate in showcase tournaments at the high school age level. Attending these events are critical for those interested in playing collegiately as college coaches primarily recruit through showcase events where they can watch several players in a single weekend. Players will need only attend training sessions in the Baltimore area on occasion while most of their training will continue to take place with Matrix Soccer Academy here on the Shore.

“This will now give Delmarva’s finest players a level playing field to prove their value and still develop their game. Thus, giving them a comprehensive pathway to achieve their goals,” Watson added.

With all the clubs available, why FC USA?

Watson says that FC USA offers a similar development model to Matrix. They only field one or two teams at each age group - unlike the larger clubs who take in as many kids as they can and simply field as many teams as numbers will allow - regardless of skill level. In addition, FC USA plays a similar possession-based style to what is taught at Matrix so the players can be integrated more readily.

“We have a development mindset and are only interested in kids that want to work hard to achieve their goals. We have no interest in being involved with a large club whose goal is quantity over quality. We feel you can’t be all things to all people and be any good at it. We’ve carved out a niche for the player and parent who wants more and that’s what we were seeking in this partnership,” Watson added.

Pete Eibner, Director of Coaching and one of the founders of FC USA is also excited about the partnership.

“We have several Matrix players playing with us right now and we see the level of technical ability they exhibit at all ages and we’re very excited to add that quality into our programming,” Eibner said.

FC USA President and Baltimore Blast Hall of Famer, Tarik Walker agrees with Eibner and believes the Matrix partnership will serve to enhance their programming as well.

“We see this partnership as a two-way street. The Matrix methodology is clearly producing highly technical players and we are excited to benefit from what Bryan and Charlie can bring to the table,” Walker added.

Matrix will be offering their proprietary training methodology for FC USA players through a camp in Baltimore this summer.

For Watson and Matrix these aren’t just dreams they are realistic goals.

“We have a history of producing professional players here in the UK and I fully anticipate that continuing with our offering in the states,” said Matrix founder Charlie Jackson. Matrix graduates like twenty-two-year-old Scott McTominay of Manchester United and recent US international Antonee Robinson, who is only twenty-one, are fledgling examples. As a paid regional scout for Major League Soccer’s Philadelphia Union, Watson is regularly on the lookout for professional caliber talent.

“The Union’s Academy is unique in that they offer a residency program and have their own onsite school. They put tremendous resources into developing their youth players as footballers and people,” said Watson.

FC USA knows that all too well having graduated one of its top players to the Union’s academy within the past six months in thirteen-year-old Jack Andrus.

Matrix player Daniel Larreinaga (13), currently recovering from a knee injury, was able to attend a three-day trial at the Union last year.

“It was a great experience. They have tremendous coaches and great facilities. I hope to have the opportunity to go back soon,” said Larreinaga.

And he should know, for thirteen he’s well-traveled having been to the Etihad Campus in Manchester, Accrington Stanley FC, Tottenham and Southampton.

Watson added, “As a development academy all we can do is provide the kids with the best training available and the opportunity to prove themselves as often as possible. This partnership will hopefully now allow us to do both on a consistent basis.”

FC USA has the same goal in mind.

“The trophies for us don’t come from tournaments on the weekend but from seeing one of our own play at a higher level,” said Walker.

One of those championship trophies was announced this month when FC USA’s own Joey Yakim was selected to participate in the 2019 id2 National Selection International Tour with the 2005/2006 boys team. They will be traveling all expenses paid to Belgium and France and play friendly matches against European competition highlighted by a match against Paris Saint-Germain FC.

It will be a busy Spring for Watson as he has been charged with scouting the top U9 through U12 players in the region to participate in two talent ID sessions held in Wilmington Delaware in late April and May for the Philadelphia Union while FC USA’s assessments take place in early May.

“I wouldn’t have it any other way. This is what we’re here for and we’re all passionate about seeing these kids get the opportunities they deserve,” added Watson.

The future definitely looks bright for footballers on the Eastern Shore.

If you’re interested in learning more about Matrix Soccer Academy and their programming, go to their futsal site at www.matrixfutsal.com or the academy site at www.matrixsoccer.org.