



Part-Time (PT) Players and Club Affiliations

The U.S. Soccer Development Academy program is focused on improving the everyday Club environments to develop players to their full potential, with the goal of becoming world class. Through established standards for coaches, players and referees, as well as the game environment, the Academy ensures players are best positioned to develop in age appropriate stages as they progress to the next level. The standards are based on best practices for the sport of soccer that is played consistently around the world and continued observations and analysis of our landscape to develop the next generation of players.

Players need training and games in a consistent standards-driven Club environment to develop to their full potential. An appropriate rhythm of regular season games (1 per weekend, maximum 2) and at least 4 training sessions a week over a 10-month period, provides players with the appropriate training to game ratio to develop. For players to have the needed playing opportunities there must be a plan for each player to receive meaningful minutes in games.

Definition

A Part-time Player (PT) player is a player who is rostered with a DA Club or their affiliate Club that is not ready or able to contribute at the Academy level full time. This player is not playing consistently and/or enough minutes in DA games to fully develop; therefore, the player is eligible to play games outside of the DA program. The PT player consistently trains 3-4 times a week (depending on their age group) and must train with both teams. The PT player is required to train a minimum of 1x every week with the DA team, in addition to their non-DA team. For example, the player trains 1-2x every week with the DA team and 1-2x every week with the non-DA team.

Rationale

The PT player initiative provides opportunities for players who are not yet ready to compete at the Academy level full time to play regularly in games outside of the DA program, in environments that benefit player development. Meaningful game minutes are an important part of the Individual Development Plan (IDP) that allow each player to follow their own pathway.

Process

The PT player registration is a serious and careful decision that should be part of a plan. Registration should only occur when the player is ready to play in an upcoming game (i.e. clubs should not register a group of PT players on the opening day of registration and then wait to play the player two months later). Clubs may add PT Players to their teams after a predetermined date (to be announced by the Development Academy for 2018-19). The maximum number of PT players is an average of 10 PT players per age group, averaged across the DA club from U-13 thru U-18/19; (U-12 age group can utilize PT players as well, but must have between 22- 26 Full-time players on the roster). A PT player must be registered in accordance with all PT player registration guidelines. Note, the top players in all DA age groups should be registered as Full-time in the DA.

Eligibility

PT players can play in a maximum of 12 DA games. *Note, at U-13/14 age groups, any PT player added to the game day roster will count as a game played.* To supplement their Academy game minutes, the PT player is eligible to also play games outside the DA on a non-DA team within the club or in an affiliate club as part of his/her individual development plan. PT players must still follow the Academy play-to-rest ratio.

PT Players may not be registered PT with any two different Academy clubs at the same time during the same Academy season (Sept-July). PT Players may only change their status to Full-time once during the Academy season and they may not return to PT player status. Furthermore, a PT Player does not automatically garner Full-time status after participating in their twelfth game. The club

must submit their intentions in writing to the Academy Office to move the player to Full-time status. Players that have played in the maximum twelve (12) games, are not eligible to continue to play in Academy games, unless the club indicates the desire to move the player to full-time status and the player status has been changed to Full-time by the Academy office. *Note, Continued usage of a PT player after their 12th game could cause a club to forfeit games due to the use of an eligible player.* Additionally, PT players are eligible to participate in the Academy Playoffs or Academy Championships.

Areas to consider and avoid with PT players:

- When misused, PT players can cause confusion within the club, especially for the player.
- Mismanaging PT players can negatively impact a team dynamic, as well as consume considerable time and resources with the registration process.
- There should be a plan for the PT player to get meaningful game experience as part of their IDP.
- A PT is NOT a false promise, or a label, or a status given to a player to help keep the player in the club.
- A PT is NOT a way to help spread or divide pay to play costs amongst a larger group of players.

Club Affiliations

An affiliation is a collaboration based on a partnership between two Clubs and confirmed in a written document that is signed by the Academy Directors and approved by the board of directors. The active partnerships are focused primarily on technical standards (not simply commercial/marketing) and will result in improved everyday environments for all clubs involved.

Qualities of recognized Club Affiliations may include:

- An active “relationship/partnership” is expected with regular contact (min. 5x per year) between the coaching staff of both Clubs (and/or talent identification centers)
- Club/coach development is part of the active “relationship” with the Clubs (and/or talent identification centers)

Recognition by the Development Academy: A contract/agreement must be signed by the DA Club's Academy Director and by the affiliate Club representative, with board approval. The signed contract/agreement document must have a clear explanation of the “relationship” between the clubs, e.g. collaboration on talent identification activities to create a clear player pathway. The signed document is then submitted to Academy staff for approval of recognition.

Clubs that establish collaborations with other Clubs in their community will have a greater chance to succeed over the long-term based on their shared efforts.