



# **SAN RAMON FC U8 ACADEMY**

## **Information Packet 2017**

**San Ramon FC**  
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## San Ramon FC U8 Program Introduction

The San Ramon FC (SRFC) U8 program provides our young players with the best possible start to their soccer experience. This information is provided to help those not familiar with the SRFC U8 program understand our program philosophy.

The focus of the SRFC U8 program is to guide and develop young soccer players through the vitally important early years of soccer, where the learning environment and coaches can have the biggest impact, be it good or bad. The SRFC staff coaches working with these players are specifically selected because they are superb at training and understanding young children. The focus at this age is to create a fun and enjoyable environment where children can learn and play under the guidance of coaches who excel with youth development.

Children at this age are like sponges, absorbing a great deal of what they see and experience first-hand. They are also capable of developing a serious love of the game at this age if exposed to the right environment. By providing a nurturing atmosphere for young players, the SRFC U8 Program helps create positive habits and attitudes, which in turn create the foundation for soccer excellence in future years. Creativity and enjoyment are highly encouraged throughout the trainings and games, as kids who enjoy the game in these youngest ages most often thrive, and are much more likely to continue playing and enjoying the game for years to come.

Our SRFC U8 program focuses on developing individual players versus focusing on the results of any game or season. It is much more important to develop players within the proper framework at this age as opposed to demanding that a team win at all costs. If the goal is simply to win there are shortcuts that coaches can take at the expense of developing the player and the team. Our ultimate goal is to help each child in the program develop skills and techniques to play the beautiful game with creativity, passion and a better understanding of their role within the game while competing.

You will notice that nowhere in these goals is winning placed above player development, learning, and fun. In fact, winning as an end in itself is not written anywhere in these goals, however, we do promote competition and encourage players to play to win using the skills and concepts learned in training. The entire emphasis of play in our youth development stages is on learning skills, improving decision making and learning to compete while having FUN. When players can play carefree and apply these concepts, winning becomes a byproduct.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

### **IMPROVING TECHNIQUE**

When players improve their technical ability they grow in confidence and creativity while gaining a greater capacity to process information. This is vital in the development of young soccer players. Improving individual technique within the game is our focus.

### **IMPROVING MOTOR SKILLS**

Focus on helping players develop and improve their basic psychomotor skills, coordination, balance, and agility.

### **IMPROVING TEAM WORK**

Our program primarily focuses on 1v1 play and creativity. However, the staff will also encourage interaction between teammates through small group activities to enhance skillful and imaginative play. For example 2v1, 2v2, 3v3 and 4v4 games and activities supplement the technique and motor skill development. The focus is for players to appropriately apply their technical skills into the game environment with teammates in small groups.

### **ENJOYING THE GAME**

It is critical that players have fun and enjoy the game. To do so, the staff creates an environment that is fun and exciting for the players as they learn new skills and make new friends. The staff believes that kids who enjoy the game of soccer tend to improve more quickly, and are much more likely to continue playing and enjoying the game in the future.

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The SRFC U8 Program will be open to up to 40 players in each gender. Each group will train two times per week. While players will be exposed to different age group coaches during training to ensure they hear and experience different coaching personalities and styles, the content and curriculum will be consistent.

Many of the players in the SRFC U8 program will come from the previous season's Recreational Fall league and/or All-Star program. In the Recreational program they are evaluated by the club's professional staff throughout the fall season and many are then invited to join the SRFC U8 Program prior to tryouts based on those evaluations. Players are selected based on skill level, athleticism, soccer IQ, and attitude. In addition, SRFC holds an open assessment date for all interested players.

The club's technical staff will oversee the selection process of all potential SRFC U8 program players. Following the open assessment period in January the club will host a pre-season informational meeting regarding the season structure, expectations and logistical details.

Beginning in mid-March, the U8 staff will offer optional training to all SRFC U8 players interested in getting a head start on the soccer season. Players are highly encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible during this time. It is possible that there may be a Spring league for U8 players in 2017. If NorCal Premier Soccer League creates this league, we will discuss participation with the parents and then decide whether we will join that Spring league. The league, like the training, will be optional. Players will begin official team training the week of July 10, 2017.

Players will be shuffled and mixed as needed during trainings, scrimmages and play days over the course of the year with flexibility provided by the academy style format. There are no fixed teams at the U8 age group.

## **TRAINING FORMAT**

Players will train two times per week from the week of July 10th through mid-November. Depending on the training content, players are often grouped by ability and skill on most training days. The staff will teach and encourage players to effectively apply correct technique and insight while allowing player creativity so players can train, learn and compete with confidence.

Practices will typically be held in station style group training. Simply put, each training session will consist of a number of stations that vary but are based on a theme, i.e. dribbling, passing, finishing. Groups will rotate through each different station in order to experience all activities and coaches. The groups will be organized by skill level in order to keep the training environment challenging for all involved. Players will be encouraged to improve at home through fun "homework" assignments & challenges throughout the year.

### **The Advantages of Group Training**

- Player development at the youngest ages is very fluid due to different rates of physical and mental maturation amongst kids. The group training system rewards players who continually work to improve their skill and understanding of the game throughout the season without limiting kids to one team.
- Players are placed in an environment that allows them to develop an awareness of the "club culture."
- Gives the SRFC U8 program staff a chance to continually evaluate across the entire age group.
- Age group training is a competitive cauldron giving players a chance to learn from, and measure themselves against, the best talent of their own age group.
- Group training allows SRFC to build the future of the club.

## **COACHING**

Each year the U8 program is assigned club staff coaches for training and games. SRFC trains its entire coaching staff through national and international coaching courses, and the staff work together to implement the club curriculum for all U8 players through internal coaching education workshops.

All coaching should be left to the coaching staff, and parents should not offer advice or instruction during training or games. Parents should refrain from giving any tactical feedback to players regarding performance unless they have consulted with the coach as they may give contradictory information which can lead to confusion or frustration for the player.

## **BE POSITIVE!**

### **POSITIVE PARENTAL SUPPORT**

Positive support is vital during times of disappointment, not just when things are going well. The ups and downs are a natural part of a young soccer player's developmental process if handled appropriately. Positive parental support does not include coaching your child from the sidelines.

### **POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT**

Positive encouragement from parents is vital in helping young soccer players succeed and enjoy the game. The job of the parents is to be their child's biggest fan. Positive feedback and encouragement should outweigh constructive criticism. This allows players to grow in confidence, which is a key to success in soccer, or any other sport.

### **POSITIVE COACHING**

Positive coaching from our staff is very important to our players' development. We must ensure that our players are instilled with confidence, understand the coach's instructions, and also have the ability to handle constructive feedback from the coach. Encouragement at this level is a massive motivational tool to making our players successful, creative and well-rounded soccer players.

## **IN SUMMARY**

As a club, we know that the age group training system will benefit your child and accelerate their development in the game of soccer. Because of our curriculum, coaches and the environment which we foster, our players improve at greater rate, all while having fun in a safe and positive environment. We are confident that your child will thrive in a setting that encourages creativity and skill rather than in one which is focused on results and standings. If you have any questions that this packet has not answered, please feel free to e-mail the Boys Technical Director, Mani Salimpour at [msalimpour@sanramonfc.com](mailto:msalimpour@sanramonfc.com) or the Girls Technical Director, Zlatko Tomic at [ztomic@sanramonfc.com](mailto:ztomic@sanramonfc.com).

# SRFC U8 Academy FAQ

## **What is the U8 Program Philosophy?**

The SRFC U8 Program philosophy is to emphasize the technical development and understanding of the game without the short-term pressures of win/loss records or results. In taking the pressure of winning away we feel that players will learn to enjoy and love the game for itself rather than just to win.

## **How old does my child have to be to be able to participate in the SRFC U8 program?**

Your son or daughter must be born between January 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 to be eligible for the SRFC U8 program. Younger players who demonstrate exceptional abilities may also be considered for the program.

## **How does my child get into the SRFC U8 program?**

San Ramon FC's Technical Directors will contact your family with a direct invitation for your child to join the program OR with information regarding the open assessment days held in January 2017.

## **When will we know on which team our child is placed?**

Your child will not be placed on a set team for trainings or games at U8. They will have the opportunity to play with everyone in the SRFC U8 program and coaches will have the flexibility to adjust training groups and game rosters accordingly. The most important thing for a player's development at this age is that they get the right level of challenge, just the right amount of adversity and confidence. When a challenge is too difficult for a player they become discouraged, lose confidence and ultimately do not enjoy what they are doing.

## **How is the weekly schedule structured?**

U8 trainings will be held twice per week during the summer/fall season. Curriculum based training will be the focus each week, and players will rotate through a variety of stations and coaches.

## **Who will SRFC U8 teams play?**

SRFCU8 teams will compete in the NorCal Premier Soccer League (Region 3-4) U8 division against other U8 teams from various soccer clubs in our area (the vast majority of teams will be from Alameda or Contra Costa County). The playing league consists of balanced teams, and all U8 competitive teams will play 5 vs 5 (4 field players plus a GK).

## **How far will we have to travel?**

Travel is kept as local as possible. All league games will be within the East Bay Area (Livermore, Castro Valley, Danville, Pleasanton, etc.), but teams may travel beyond that a couple of times each season. Typically all games are within a 20 mile radius (usually closer) and do not require overnight stays. Scrimmage and tournament games are also held in the surrounding areas throughout the year.

## **What is the U8 playing format?**

The U8s play 5 vs 5 throughout the entire season (4 plus a GK).

## **When we will know the schedule of games?**

Game schedules are created by administrators of our playing league, NorCal Premier, and typically released a few weeks prior to the start of the fall season.

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### Will teams still enter tournaments throughout the season?

U8 teams will participate in friendly games and/or jamborees against other local U8 clubs prior to the start of the fall league season.

### When does the SRFC U8 program season start and finish?

Players are invited to join the U8 program in January, though team training and the official season will not begin until the week of July 10th of 2017. SRFC U8 players are allowed to participate in the spring SRFC Junior Skills sessions in March at no additional cost, and players are highly encouraged to attend. The official season begins the week of July 10, 2017, and ends in November 2017 upon the conclusion of the final league play day. Scrimmage games and jamborees start as early as July and run through Labor Day Weekend.

### Where are practices held and what days and times?

Practice days and times will be announced at tryouts. Days and times are subject to change throughout the season depending on field availability and field conditions.

### What is the cost of the SRFCU8 Program?

The cost to play SRFC U8 includes the following: \$280.00 registration fee + \$605.00 program fee + \$125.00 refundable volunteer deposit (per family) each season (5 months). Fees break down to less than \$8.00/hour per player and covers training, field rentals, league fees, insurance, coach salaries, referee costs, and San FC registration fees for the entire season.

### What is the fee structure of the SRFCU8 Academy Program?

\$280.00 registration fee and \$125.00 volunteer deposit are due in January when each player commits to the program with the remaining balance of \$605.00 is paid in installments of \$151.25 from February through May.

### Are there additional costs outside of those mentioned above?

Yes. Each player is required to purchase the SRFCU8 uniform (about \$75.00), and also contributes \$150 - \$200.00 towards team costs in addition to the club fees listed above. Team costs primarily pay for tournament/jamboree registration fees and are divided by the total number of players in the U8 age group.

## U8 PROGRAM CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

U8 SRFCPROGRAM	LEAGUE	TRAINING	* TOURNAMENTS	PLACEMENTS	CAMPS/ PROGRAMS	TIME OFF
JANUARY 2017				Jan 24 - Jan 29		All Month
FEBRUARY		Winter Break			Parent Meeting	All Month
MARCH		Jr Skills Clinic 2017 (Optional)*				
APRIL		Jr Skills Clinic 2017 (Optional)*				
MAY		Jr Skills Clinic 2017 (Optional)*				
JUNE		Summer Break	None		Parent Meeting	All Month
JULY	Scrimmages	2x/week (Week of July 10th)	None		Summer Camp (Optional)*	July 1st - July 9th
AUGUST	U8 Scrimmages	2x/week	Play Day			
SEPTEMBER	NorCal Premier U8 League Play Days	2x/week	Play Day			
OCTOBER	NorCal Premier U8 League Play Days	2x/week	Halloween Tournament			
NOVEMBER	NorCal Premier U8 League Days	2x/week			Winter Camp (Optional)*	Nov 4- Nov 30th
DECEMBER	Futsal (optional)*	Winter Futsal Academy (optional)*				Dec 1st – Dec 31st