



Charlotte Soccer Academy (CSA) and Charlotte United Futbol Club (CUFC) Boards of Directors, Executive Directors and Director of Soccer are excited to announce they have come together to start the process of merging the two clubs for the 2018-2019 season.

The joint vision of CSA and CUFC is to provide the foundation for Charlotte to develop into a national hub for youth soccer. The goal is to create a club that can be inclusive for all children in Charlotte and provide access to soccer that is not limited by location, socioeconomics, or ability. We are certain the merged organization will have the finest coaching and practice/game facilities in the region.

CSA and CUFC have an excellent professional relationship with similar philosophies and infrastructures. Bringing together the two premier Charlotte clubs creates countless new avenues for all youth players within the Charlotte soccer community from recreation to the US Developmental Academy level.

A focus will remain on developing soccer and life skills. The new structure will offer more options for youth players to compete at appropriate levels of play while allowing for growth within the club. The combined clubs will be better able to service the elite-level players where combining programs creates opportunities to compete at the highest levels in ALL age groups at State, Regional and National competitions. Merging also increases our ability to attract significant corporate sponsorships from companies looking to support youth sports in our community.

We're sure there are a lot of questions from both clubs regarding how this merger will affect each individual player on each team. Accompanying this press release is an FAQ which we hope will answer a lot of questions and put our members' minds at rest as we head into the spring season with tryouts and assessments fast approaching for our older girls' USYS and USSDA programs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Cantalupo".

Jim Cantalupo - President, CSA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Rush".

Matt Rush - President, CUFC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Wylde".

Brad Wylde - Executive Director, CSA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Finneyfrock".

Bill Finneyfrock - Executive Director, CUFC



CSA and CUFC Merger Frequently Asked Questions

- ***What does the merger mean?***

CUFC will join CSA as a merger of two entities. The combined club will operate under the Charlotte Soccer Academy name. All locations of CSA and CUFC will operate with the same philosophy of training, developing and providing all levels of soccer to those who wish to play.

- ***Why will the merged entity not operate under a different name?***

This would have been ideal and was discussed at length; however, because of the considerable investment that CSA has incurred in branding the OrthoCarolina Soccer Complex and its name recognition on a regional and national level we decided to move forward as CSA.

- ***How will the 2018-19 USYS tryouts be organized / run? Will all players from CSA and CUFC tryout together or will there be separate tryouts?***

The merged Charlotte Soccer Academy will hold tryouts at several different locations, including the OrthoCarolina Sportsplex, CPI/Flat Branch Park, Palisades, Ramblewood, Matthews Sportsplex, Colonel Beatty Park, Frank Liske Park Soccer Complex, Dilworth/Uptown area, North Meck Park, Strikers Soccer Center and Red Ventures. A player can choose which location they attend. For example, a current CUFC player could elect to tryout at the OrthoCarolina Sportsplex in Pineville for his /her age group if levels are not currently available at their current location or if the location is preferable for practices and games.

- ***What does this merger mean for my child's team? I was under the impression that this team moves up together with their coach?***

If you are currently on a CUFC team, **the merger itself doesn't break up teams.** A merger will provide families the ability to utilize all club resources and from the club's perspective it gives the opportunity to add more depth to teams. If an age group in a current location doesn't have enough players, we can offer an alternative location instead of players leaving the club or having to play up in an age division. CSA and CUFC share the philosophy to change coaches every two to three years. This gives the players a change of style and approach to coaching. Having a coach for a longer period of time isolates the player from experiencing different styles and can limit the player's development.

- ***Will my son/daughter have to try out all over again? If so, will he/she get a fair shot in tryouts? If CSA does put their club members first and offers them spots first, so what does that mean for the CUFC players?***

As is currently the case all players must try out every year. Tryouts run at Ramblewood or the OrthoCarolina Sportsplex, for example will be operated and directed by combined staff from both organizations. If a player has aspirations to try out for a higher level than they've been playing, they are welcome to research another location within the CSA platform. Coaching staff from all locations will give recommendations and insight into their players. All players will go through tryouts and prior to tryouts will be given info as to where they should fall for the upcoming season.

For example, if a player trying out at the Palisades is evaluated and found to be good enough to play on a higher-level team based at OrthoCarolina, the parents may be given an opportunity for their child to play on that higher-level team if they and the staff believe it to be a good thing for the development of that player. As recommended by US Soccer, this process should be taking place at all levels of play and age groups and can mean that a player will not necessarily play with the same players all through their youth soccer experience. We will become one club and players within both CUFC and CSA will be given first and equal opportunities to be selected on higher level teams.

- ***Is CUFC going to be a separate section within CSA?***

CUFC and CSA will be a merged entity competing as Charlotte Soccer Academy. Practice and game venues will continue to be identified by their location like CSA North/Cabarrus and CSA Matthews. Other sections will be implemented like CSA Palisades for example. Directors of Coaching will be assigned to run sections and age groups at designated locations like both clubs currently do. Brad Wylde, Executive Director of CSA, and Steve Magee, Director of Soccer for CUFC, will be working together to assign DOCS for appropriate sections. As we integrate staff and coaches, familiarity and geography will drive team assignments. All CSA sections will follow the same philosophy, developing players and placing players at the appropriate levels and locations.

- ***Are we keeping our teams together?***

Teams will not be intentionally split up – each player has the opportunity to try out at whatever location they choose and will be placed accordingly.

- ***How much of our current staff will be retained for the upcoming years?***

The current CUFC staff will become CSA staff. Steve Magee will be working with Brad Wylde to assign staff appropriately to the teams/sections available for the merged club, based on the needs of the combined player pool.

- ***I understand what CSA gets, but why is this good for CUFC? What does CUFC get out of the merger, since most of the players could be playing there already if they wanted to?***

CUFC will have opportunity to utilize the additional programs that CSA provides and the varied levels of play. CSA is one of two clubs in NC and SC that has every level of play under the USYS structure. Some players have aspirations to play at highest level; others want to play with friends and close to home. This merger provides that opportunity. Having this partnership ensures that teams don't struggle with roster numbers and team availability in all age groups. We will retain those aspects of the club that makes CUFC a great place to play while benefiting from CSA's success.

- ***Do we have to wear CSA uniforms?***

CSA is excited to announce a new deal with a high-profile apparel company in the coming weeks which will help create a new look for the combined club. CSA has been offered a multi-year contract with this company and will be headlined as their #1 supported and marketed club in the US. More information will be announced in the coming weeks.

- ***Basically, how will the day-to-day operation change?***

Day-to-day will not change but the club's main office will predominantly be at the OrthoCarolina Sportsplex in Pineville.

- ***How will our fees change?***

Fees for CSA and CUFC at the Classic, Select, Youth Academy and Recreation levels are currently comparable – no significant changes are anticipated. Any changes will be almost the same as if it were two separate clubs. The philosophies and infrastructure of both clubs are very similar making the merger much easier.

- ***Will the clubs have separate finances?***

All player fees, club operating expenses, registration fees and tournament finances will be tracked collectively as one club.

- ***In recent years, cooperation has been lacking between CUFC and CSA. Provide specific examples of how this will change in 2018-19.***

CSA and CUFC currently have a very good professional relationship and ultimately, we all want the same things for our players. It is in the best interest of both clubs to combine into a successful preeminent soccer organization. A common philosophy of development and a combined structure is why this merger will be a success through the partnership and cooperation of senior staff and the Boards of Directors. It is natural for there to be a healthy rivalry between the two significant clubs in a city. By combining efforts, we believe the resources of the merged club will be greater than the sum of the two individual clubs as separate entities.

- ***Who will decide what teams practice where?***

Practice locations will be comparable to the current setup. Merging opens up additional field locations and furthers our relationships as one entity rather than two clubs with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation.

- ***What will be the board structure of the merged club?***

The board will be made up of current board members from both CSA and CUFC. Board member representation will correlate with membership sizes between the two organizations.

- ***How will the new club communicate with parents?***

Good communication is a priority for both CSA and CUFC. After the merger, that will not change. The club relies on the website, emails, Facebook, Twitter and other social media just to name a few. Monthly updates/newsletters are sent to all players.

- ***How many teams will be in each age group?***

Prior to tryouts, the goal will be to get as much info as possible as to teams available, coaching, fees, uniforms, etc. This is a work in progress and as information becomes available we will share it with our families. More will come in the spring and later this fall for the older girls' tryouts. The combined entity brings more opportunities with more levels.

- ***What will be the policy for "playing up?"***

If a player is exceeding their level of play and there is not a team available in their current age bracket that addresses the need of that player – we do promote playing up to enhance skills and development. Because of the size of the club, we will probably have a team(s) play up an age in the younger age groups. This is designed to prepare the future US Soccer Development Academy players with the aspiration and natural ability to be considered for this program as they further their soccer careers.

- ***With more players and teams, how will financial aid be determined?***

CSA gave over \$90,000 in financial aid this past year and CUFC gave over \$35,000. We share the philosophy that a family's lack of financial resources should not keep a child from playing soccer. CSA has a formal process for families to submit a request for assistance. This process insures fairness and an equitable distribution of resources. Families receiving financial aid are asked to assist the club through volunteer hours. The philosophy at CSA is no player is turned away because they can't afford to pay.