



NEWS RELEASE

MLS NEXT Announces Strategic Alliance with Girls Academy to Enhance Player Development and Grow the Sport in North America

*Strategic alliance with Girls Academy aligns pathways for top boys and girls clubs;
The 2025 Generation Adidas Cup will introduce a girls competition*



NEW YORK (Tuesday, December 17, 2024) – MLS NEXT has formed a strategic alliance with the Girls Academy (GA), a leading youth development platform for female soccer players in the United States, to work together on technical standards, innovation, membership opportunities, and event integrations to enhance player development throughout North America.

“Our strategic alliance with the Girls Academy fosters an aligned development pathway for boys and girls aspiring to reach their highest potential,” said MLS NEXT General Manager Kyle Albrecht. “We believe this is an important step in growing the sport in North America, as the alignment between both programs will greatly benefit players, families, and clubs.”

Founded in 2020, the Girls Academy provides elite competition and player development opportunities for female athletes, featuring 114 clubs and over 16,000 players (including 48 clubs that have a boys team in MLS NEXT). GA member clubs compete in U13 to U19 age groups split into 11 conferences across the country. MLS NEXT will integrate select GA clubs into a girls competition at the 2025 Generation adidas Cup, creating a high-level showcase at the prestigious international tournament.

“The Girls Academy is thrilled to partner with MLS NEXT on a shared vision to elevate players and standards to the highest level,” said Girls Academy Commissioner Patricia Hughes. “MLS NEXT is the leader in the North American ecosystem and together we will focus on driving the game forward. Our collaboration will prioritize player-centric development, emphasizing the individual growth of each athlete.

This alliance represents a significant step toward ensuring players, coaches and clubs have the resources they need to reach their full potential."

MLS NEXT and the GA will also work together on coaching education and innovation programs as well as hosting regional showcase events in which teams from MLS NEXT and the GA will attend. These regional events will simplify scheduling and travel for players, families, and clubs and ensure boys and girls teams are competing in front of college, professional, and national team scouts.

About MLS NEXT

Launched in 2020, MLS NEXT is the most elite platform for youth player development in North America. With a commitment to innovation and providing access and representation, MLS NEXT players receive the best training and coaching as they prepare for their futures, both in soccer and in life. MLS NEXT hosts four marquee events across the country, including the Generation adidas Cup, which features MLS academies playing against the top international clubs, and the MLS NEXT Cup Playoffs. Membership for the 2024-25 season included 29 MLS academies, 122 Elite Academies (151 total clubs), 753 teams and over 16,000 players across the U.S. and Canada. Official partners of MLS NEXT include adidas, Allstate, and DoorDash. For more information about MLS NEXT, visit www.mlssoccer.com/mlsnext.

About Girls Academy

The Girls Academy is the leading youth development platform for the best female soccer players in the United States. The GA consists of over 114 member clubs with teams in the U13 to U19 age groups split into 11 conferences across the country. Senior leadership at the GA is committed to cultivating an environment that empowers each player to reach their best potential as an exceptional athlete and human being by celebrating the player's journey with a lifelong love of the game through competition, showcases, and camaraderie. For more information, visit girlsacademyleague.com.