



Illinois Fire Juniors, Peoria FC United and Springfield Area Soccer Association join forces to enhance Central Illinois soccer

The three largest clubs in the region are coming together to provide nationally recognized opportunities for the top players in our region.

NORMAL, ILL (April 22, 2021) - Illinois Fire Juniors, Peoria FC United and the Springfield Area Soccer Association have agreed in principle to a formal partnership in support of two elite platforms - Eclipse Select Central Illinois for girls and Central Illinois United (CIU) for boys - beginning in the fall of 2021.

Girls

Following last month's announcement of the affiliation agreement between Eclipse Select Soccer Club and Illinois Fire Juniors, we are pleased to share that Peoria FC United (PFCU) and Springfield Area Soccer Association (SASA) will make Central Illinois United girls part of that affiliation, in an effort to bring all of the top female players in the region together. They'll compete at the U13 to U19 levels in the newly formed Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) Heartland Regional League, with the goal of reaching the national level within two years. The four clubs will be equal partners in this new, Eclipse Select led venture.

"ECNL is the top female platform in the United States and for girls to play in a regional league with the chance – if we do well – to move to the national league is everything we could hope for from a competitive standpoint," said Mike Matkovich, Executive Director, Eclipse Select Central Illinois. "I want to thank Rory Dames and Mike Necsí of Eclipse Select for bringing this tremendous opportunity to Central Illinois. I'm excited to lead us down this player development pathway and help take it to another level."

Boys

We are also pleased to announce that Illinois Fire Juniors will join with PFCU and SASA to become part of Central Illinois United on the boys side. This will coincide with expansion to U13 and U14 and entering some teams in the Midwest Conference – National League, to provide better competition and a qualification pathway to the US Youth Soccer Regional Championship in addition to State Cup. The three clubs will be equal partners in the CIU initiative, which was established in 2014 and has provided the top male players in the region the opportunity to play together and compete in top flights of prestigious regional and national events.

"Val Walker and I established the Central Illinois United initiative as a platform to show what boys in this region are capable of on a national stage and get them more exposure to college coaches," said Edgar Sandoval, Founder and President, Central Illinois United. "But doing it for more teams meant more support was critical. Now, having IFJ join PFCU and SASA, you have the three largest clubs in the region putting their people and facilities behind both boys and girls programs. This only enhances the original vision."

Tryouts

Girls

AGE GROUP	BIRTH YEAR	DAY 1	TIME	DAY 2	TIME	LOCATION
U13 Girls	2009	May 24	5-6:30PM	May 25	5-6:30PM	Corn Crib
U14 Girls	2008	May 24	6-7:30PM	May 25	6-7:30PM	Corn Crib
U15 Girls	2007	May 24	7-8:30PM	May 25	7-8:30PM	Corn Crib
U16 Girls	2006	June 20	5-6:30PM	June 21	5-6:30PM	Neis Field/Corn Crib
U17 Girls	2005	June 20	6:30-8PM	June 21	6:30-8PM	Neis Field/Corn Crib
U18 Girls	2004	June 20	8-9:30PM	June 21	8-9:30PM	Neis Field/Corn Crib
U19 Girls	2003	June 20	8-9:30PM	June 21	8-9:30PM	Neis Field/Corn Crib

Boys

U13 (2009), U14 (2008), U15 (2007)

Monday, May 24th, 6-8 PM in Peoria

Tuesday, May 25th, 6-8 PM in Springfield

U16 (2006), U17 (2005), U18 (2004), U19 (2003)

November 2021 – exact times and locations TBA

Questions

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