

Lou Ruffien



Lou Ruffien training at the FC Barcelona camp in Spain in February, 2018.

Lou Ruffien is a Fusion SC Girls player that currently competes alongside her 2007 Academy 1 teammates. Lou has been with Fusion since its inception and has been trailblazing her path ever since. Coaches and teammates alike agree that her impact on the game is immense.

“Not only is her ability amazing, she is one of the hardest working players that I have ever worked with,” said Chad Morse, Lou’s coach and Fusion SC Girls Director of Coaching, from the 2017-18 season. Last year, Lou and her teammates led the 2008 Academy 1 team to an undefeated season, which included besting some boys teams in nearby communities.

Last season, Lou had the opportunity to travel to Spain and compete with some of the best players at her age group in a camp held by the world-famous football club, FC Barcelona. This invitation-only opportunity fueled her love for the game and the experience was, as Lou describes, “amazing.” As a part of the Fusion Feature for this month, we asked Lou (and her parents) to share insight about her camp experience.

Interview

When did the camp take place?

LR: The camp was held in February of last winter. It lasted 10 days in Barcelona.

What was the camp like? What activities took place each day at camp?

LR: Each day was filled with a lot of soccer, from sun up to sun down. Each morning we would wake up and eat breakfast. After the morning meal we would get on a bus for morning training sessions.

The training sessions would include different topics, but most importantly the sessions all challenged us to compete at a high level. The morning sessions would last until lunch time when we would get a little break before heading out in the afternoon to play games.

Many times, the girls and boys would be combined, so although it was tough competition, we learned to play quick and in a smart fashion.



What were your observations about the style of soccer in Spain / Europe?

LR: The style is different than in Minnesota. The creativity of players is amazing and I learned a lot. We played with and against many local players and it is easy to tell how much soccer means to the culture and everyone there. They are very focused on helping players learn to do things the right ways at very early ages.

The level of play at camp was very high. The coaches there really focused on the details. They are very detailed when it comes to technical skills, tactical awareness, and the player’s self-confidence. They also pushed us to be strong communicators on the field to help team success.

One of my favorite things was to compete and play with the boys at camp. I had to earn their respect as a soccer player and prove to them I could play with them.

With a name as big as FC Barcelona, who were some of the leaders that you met at the camp?

LR: We had a career orientation with Marco Segarra, who used to play for FC Barcelona and we also had the opportunity to meet the CEO of the ISL, Alex Isern. Both of these soccer leaders gave us amazing insight into their world and how important soccer was to them. We also had the opportunity to meet some current professional players including Andre Gomez and Paco Alcacer.

What was your favorite part of the entire camp?

LR: My favorite part was the fact that it was 24/7 soccer. I also made some very good friends and my teammates were amazing. I left this camp knowing that I have to work harder as I want to become a professional player, but I know that I also have to work hard at school to have a plan B. I can’t wait to go back to Europe and play!

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What were some other highlights of the trip?

LR: One of the coolest experiences of the whole trip was the tour we received of Camp Nou. Camp Nou is the home stadium of FC Barcelona. It was built in 1957 and has a capacity of nearly 100,000. It is one of the largest stadiums in all of Europe.

The history and players that have played there was amazing to learn about. We also got the chance to see an FC Barcelona game vs Getafe and also got to see Espanyol vs Villarreal.

It was incredible to see players such as Messi, Suarez, Dembele and Igniesta play at the highest levels of the game. We were so close to them during the game. I also had the chance to meet Xavi Simons, who is only 15 years old, but many say is going to be the next Messi.

Sounds like an amazing experience! Please tell us a little bit about what’s in your immediate future and your love for Fusion SC.

LR: Fusion SC has provided me with outstanding development. I have had the best coaches ever who made me truly love soccer (Katie Bethke and Chad Morse). I also love Fusion SC for all the teammates that I am able to compete with. The team spirit is amazing.

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What are some of your goals for the future?

LR: I will continue to work harder than ever before and my goal is to be on the US National team and be a part of the Olympic team. I want to continue to be the best player I can be for myself and for my teammates.



Lou (third from right) with her camp teammates in Barcelona. Lou enjoyed the high level of play and the creativity of her teammates and opponents.

We would like to thank Lou and her parents for the information highlighted in this month’s Fusion Feature. Lou has a return trip planned this upcoming summer in July. The ISL Futbol organization will be hosting their annual July tournament (Donosti Cup) and Lou is invited back for more fun, competition, and development opportunities.

Congratulations Lou!