

## **Frequently asked questions regarding the West Hempstead Chiefs Travel Academy (WHCTA)**

### **What are the goals of the West Hempstead Chiefs soccer club?**

Our club was founded to provide the youth of West Hempstead the opportunity to learn and play soccer and to learn the values of good sportsmanship. Some families and players are happy playing the game for recreation while others seek a more competitive venue. The size of our club has made it challenging to satisfy everyone. The newly created West Hempstead Chiefs Travel Academy will satisfy the more competitive player, while the intramural program will provide a venue for the player who likes to play but is not interested in making a big commitment to the game. Travel soccer on Long Island has evolved over the past decade. Originally the more competitive travel program only began at the U12 level (Fundamentally this is when most experts believe that youth soccer or any other sport should be played at a competitive level). Living in the New York area and on Long Island in particular there is a tremendous amount of competition between LIJSL and the new JSS league competing for travel team registrations. In a race to lure teams to join their leagues they are offering competition to younger and younger age groups. The Chiefs have always been hesitant for the right reasons to send travel teams out at such an early age. Unfortunately many people are misinformed about the demands of a travel team and how they affect a young child and feel that going out to travel at U8 (yes a local league is planning this) is the answer. The Academy program will evaluate each player and team individually to determine which level of competition will best suit the players. In addition to the Academy we will be introducing the philosophy of playing “total football” where everyone at each age group, travel or intramural, is focusing on key skill sets. This has been a long process to get to this point and we as a club are moving forward with this aggressive new format.

### **What is the West Hempstead Chiefs Travel Academy?**

The Academy is for players born between August 1, 1999 and July 31, 2003 and will provide training to any player regardless of skill who wants to pursue a competitive career in soccer. Skilled or unskilled players at the age of 8 are not the same players at the age of 12. We do not want to close the door on soccer for the unskilled player or semi interested player at such a young age because the player’s most important body part, the mind, is still developing. The Academy provides the opportunity for a player to develop at his/her own pace. Players will train together with professional trainers and competition will be provided that is suited to their individual skill levels. The Academy format allows a less skillful player who wants to make a larger commitment to soccer the opportunity to grow and develop alongside other talented players and play competitively at a level that will best benefit him/her. It also provides the highly skilled player the opportunity to play competitively with teammates well suited to his/her ability level. Because ability levels continuously change at this young age, team placement will not be permanent but will change as a player’s ability level changes.

### **What if my child’s age group is full?**

The Academy will include all players that wish to participate. This is an underlying purpose of the WHCTA, no child left behind. We will combine age groups if necessary and if a player wants to be in a travel environment they will have the opportunity to play. Every travel coach you ask in the older age groups will tell you they wish

they had a pool of players to be able to go to when they need to expand their rosters. Travel coaches are limited to the number of players they can roster, especially in the younger age groups. The Academy will allow players to train at a more intense level and play in games that will provide them with the competition level which will allow them an opportunity to succeed.

### **How will the Academy affect the Intramural Program?**

The intramural program will continue to provide players the opportunity to learn and play soccer as before. Professional training will still be available to the intramural player along with weekly practices and games with his/her coach.

### **My son or daughter is currently on a Travel team what happens to them?**

Nothing, they remain on their current travel team and the team can add players if they need to. They are not obligated to add a player. You will still have training and league games.

### **My child is eligible to play on a U9 travel team, what happens in the fall?**

In July, once the teams are determined, the players will meet collectively with their parents, coach and trainer (from the DV Soccer Academy).

Beginning in late August the team will meet weekly for 1 hour with their trainer and coach at a time agreed upon by the club. The coaching staff can extend practice up to 45 minutes without the trainer to go over other fundamentals.

The teams will not be registered as travel teams in the LIJSL U9 fall season. We will be strictly using season 1 for preparing the players and coaches. Five inter-town home games are being arranged with another club in our area. These games will follow LIJSL guidelines at the U9 level but will be meant to test the development of the player based on the skills learned in training.

The remaining games will be small sided games played within the team. Soccer professionals agree that small sided games are best for players of this age. It allows them more touches of the ball and more opportunities to make decisions.

The players will be entered into a Columbus Day tournament of the Travel Board's choosing. All players will participate. No credit is given if a family is not available on the weekend. If possible, two teams will be formed based on competitiveness and placed in a proper bracket. The Travel Board along with the head coach will determine the coach the second team. If necessary or possible, intramural players will be invited to participate to complete teams.

During the winter season we will arrange gym time when available and offer the coaches opportunities to scrimmage with other WHCTA teams (This will depend upon the budget of the West Hempstead School Board

and the club). The team will enter into one winter tournament of the Travel Boards choosing. These fees will be paid by the families.

Before the spring season, the Travel board will make a determination on the skill level of a team and commitment of the parents as a whole and will recommend entering the Spring LIJSL program or continuing with the training as in the fall. Either way, the player will still have a two game per week commitment.

At the conclusion of the spring season the trainers, coaches and Travel Board will evaluate teams and realign as necessary. Tryouts for the following fall season will begin in June 2011.

### **My child is eligible to play on a U10 team, what happens in the fall?**

The same as above, however if an existing U10 team roster is full, players will be evaluated on their skill sets. If two teams can be formed they will be. The U10 teams will compete in the appropriate division in LIJSL. Players will also continue to play in the Sunday morning intramural league as they have for the past two seasons. This will again be open soccer for U10 – U14 players.

### **Why do Academy players need to play two games a week?**

The player who chooses the Travel Academy now, will need the intramural player in upcoming seasons and it is in the best interest of future teams to continue to have them playing together. Top soccer clubs such as Albertson and Farmingdale expect the same commitment from their families. Besides, the intramural games are the perfect time for the players to have fun. Bora Milutinovic, the former Coach of the US men's National team, always said the biggest problem with US soccer is the players did not know how to have fun. That is fore front in our mind.

### **Will Academy players need to practice twice per week?**

No, we will incorporate additional time before the intramural games for the intramural coaches to work on game strategy and light skills training. The players choosing not to be part of the Academy will have training during the week with their coaches and Club provided training with mixed age groups. We encourage coaches to attend practices with the trainer as well, so they can learn what skill sets and drills their team is working on and can develop a training program that will be effective for now and into the future.