



PRESS RELEASE  
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### **Thoughts from the USSDA and ECNL**

As the Springfield SC continually works towards growing soccer in the Ozarks, we feel it is important for everyone to understand what is available to them in the soccer world. SSC is the only club to have players play at the highest levels of youth soccer in the USA. The United States Soccer Development Academy (USSDA), and Elite Clubs National League (ECNL) are the penultimate leagues available to boys and girls respectively. SSC currently has 1 player in the USSDA and 4 players in the ECNL. We have asked a couple of those players to give their feedback on their current experiences playing at that level. Here you go:

#### **Dallas Moses, USSDA**

"I was very excited about getting the opportunity to play in Chicago at the showcase this weekend. Chicago Fire, Shattuck St. Mary, FC Milwaukee, Indiana Fire, and SLSC Metro were the teams that played this weekend. When we first got there I was impressed with the Chicago Fire's complex; the stadium field, and two training fields (1 turf field, 1 grass). Both days we played on the turf field. We played FC Milwaukee the first day at 3:00pm with a pre-game meal at the hotel at 12pm.

We started off strong and were knocking the ball around well. We went down in the first half off a free kick near the corner flag. The ball was played in and we weren't matched up well enough and got punished for it. Then we tied it up in the second half when our forward got turned and struck the ball right outside the eighteen and beat the keeper far post. Towards the end of the game we gave up a second goal when FC Milwaukee's forward got turned himself and hit a rip from about twenty out. We ended up losing the game 2-1. The second game we played Shattuck (a year round college prep school that focuses on athletics as well, Sporting KC Forward Teal Bunbury attended). We started with good movement off the ball and had a couple of chances on goal. The final score was 4-1 Shattuck. However, I thought we played really well in some instances. I hit the cross bar off a free kick, and we had several other chances to score, we just didn't capitalize.

All in all I thought the weekend was really good. I played pretty well and I thought the team played pretty well also. We got to see the Chicago Fire play Santos Laguna on Saturday night which was awesome."

#### **Nicole Ortega, ECNL**

"As I was sitting in the car on my way to Michigan, I was getting nervous. I had no idea what to expect. Before these games I had only played with my ECNL team once and we played the SLSC U16 Elite. I really had no idea what level the competition would be, nor how my team would compare. I was anxious, but the more I thought about it, the more excited I got. All week long I had been staying after practice to work on things, making sure I was prepared for the big weekend. I got to Detroit around 5p.m. Friday night and almost immediately went to a light training session. All the ECNL girls from U14's to U18's trained together, playing soccer tennis and tag in the parking lot. The next morning we had a team breakfast and walk, then it was off to the game against Vardar.

This game was pretty hard for me because I felt so out of sync. I was not used to playing with this team, nor were they used to playing with me. We lost 3-1 which was a tough loss because we should have easily won. At this point I was getting really nervous for our next game against the Michigan Hawks because they were supposed to be a much better team. Saturday morning we had another team breakfast and walk. On the walk our coach decided to change the line-up and have me start up top. You could immediately tell that this team was significantly better. It was intimidating to find out that their forward has already verbally committed to North Carolina, and several of their other players are on the National team. However, within the first few minutes of the game, I realized we could compete with them. We ended up losing 2-1, but the game could have gone either way.

This past weekend has made it very clear to me that I have the best of both worlds. These games have me excited to see how I can develop as a player and how my team will rank against the other ECNL teams."

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