

## **BSC's VISION FOR YOU: NAVIGATING THE LANDSCAPE OF YOUTH SOCCER**



Over the past 20 years, the landscape of youth soccer has seen an increase in for-profit, Academy style soccer organizations. These programs often times cost between 3-4 thousand dollars in annual registration fees alone, thus earning the moniker of “Pay-to-Play” Soccer. There are many involved with soccer who are critical of the pay-to-play model, going so far as to say it hurts soccer in America all the way up to the National level. While others laud the creation of elite soccer Academies that offer the best quality of soccer training and games. The Beacon Soccer Club (BSC) has been in existence since 1978, as started by Patrick Kerr and a group of dedicated volunteers. Our club has been delivering quality soccer to the youth of Beacon and the surrounding community ever since. As such, we have seen and experienced both the good and bad of pay-to-play soccer.

BSC is a 100% volunteer organization, fueled by dedicated people who donate their time and energy to the young people of our community. BSC offers an In-House intramural program and an advanced Travel Soccer program. Our programs are designed for players from age 4 to 19. Our Mini program is for 4-5 yr. olds, Jr. Pee wee 6-7 year olds, Pee wee 8-9 year olds, Intermediate 10-13 year olds and Senior for 14-19 year olds. Our Travel program ranges from U9 to U15 (though we do try to keep teams together through U19) and the level of play ranges from developmental up to the highest available. A fundamental reality of travel soccer is that our club needs to maintain a critical mass of players at every age level to be able to offer teams in both our Rec and travel programs.

We have seen players thrive and succeed following the BSC pathway! We offer this document as a guide for parents and players to help navigate the landscape of youth soccer.

### **THE ACRONYM LEAGUES OF YOUTH SOCCER**

If you are reading this, it is most likely because you are interested in the level of soccer that your child is playing. This might also mean that you have heard of soccer leagues like HVYSL, EDP, ECNL, MLS Next, USYS, etc. But what do all of these acronyms stand for? Most of the Board members of the BSC have had children/grandchildren play soccer at all levels. We have had players begin their careers in the BSC rec league, play into the BSC travel program and even move onto “higher” level programs in EDP and ECNL. To help you consider your child’s soccer development and trajectory, we first want you to understand what all the initials mean for soccer leagues and levels.



The above illustration does a credible job at ranking the hierarchy of the various leagues around the country (taken from soccer rankings app). Most of the clubs playing in the leagues above are pay-to-play at various levels of cost, while MLS Next (boys) is the only program that is sometimes no/low cost.

So, what is the difference between an Academy and the town-based travel program? The most significant difference is the for-profit, professional nature of an academy. The coaches are paid, they tend to have “better” quality facilities, the registration fee is significantly greater, and the players come from around the region (as opposed to just a town or surrounding towns). Playing for one of World Class FC U14 ECNL/RL teams will cost \$3000 in registration fees alone, while BSC’s U14 travel teams cost \$300 in registration fees. Below is a simple guide to each of the different leagues.

**Hudson Valley Youth Soccer League** – This is the league that BSC is part of. It is made up of town-based travel teams from around the immediate region. Some local academy teams play in this league (i.e. Just Play Soccer, Fox Academy, Nirvana, etc.). HVYSL would be considered a league. It is developmental to competitive soccer. Around the country, these regional club teams are usually a child’s first introduction to soccer.

**EDP (Elite Development Program)** – This is often referred to as “Premier” level travel soccer. Town based travel teams and some Academy programs play in these leagues. Generally considered a higher level than HVYSL (but, depending on the team, that is not always the case). BSC has had numerous teams play in the EDP leagues, as well as play competitively against EDP teams in regional tournaments. In our region, teams play out of the New York Club Soccer League

and usually play in divisions based geographically around the Hudson Valley, New York City and, sometimes, Long Island.

**ECRL Northeast (Elite Club Regional League Northeast)** – In an attempt to expand offerings to other quality clubs, the ECNL opened up a number of additional leagues around the country. These leagues are considered a very good 3<sup>rd</sup> tier option for clubs (non ECNL and non-ECNLRL). The main difference is that these clubs do not have a top-level team in the ECNL. Local teams include Quickstrike, Force FC, and Manhattan Soccer Club. While viewed as third tier, teams do have the ability to play their way into top-level ECNL showcases and tournaments.

**USYS PRO & Elite 64** – These leagues are primarily for non-ECNL academies and the highest level, town-based travel teams. Teams play in the USYS National League. Teams have to qualify for the playoff system. These leagues offer a national playoff that allows winning teams to qualify for the USYS Regional and National Tournaments.

**ECNL/RL (Elite Clubs National League & Regional League)** – This league is made up of 9 conferences around the country for clubs with the highest standards in facilities, coaching and guaranteed opportunities for regular, top-level games. High School sports are allowed. College recruitment happens at both NL and RL – the top level Division 1 college soccer programs recruit almost exclusively from MLS Next and ECNL. The ECNL team within a club is their top team and the RL club is viewed as the second team. The closest ECNL program in our region is World Class Football Club in Orangeburg NY. *(GA or Girls Academy is generally considered on the same level as ECRL).*

**MLS Next (boys only)** – MLS Next players have access to the highest levels of competition and training to prepare them for college, professional and national level soccer. Some are low cost or no cost programs. High School soccer is not allowed at this level. 90% of the youth national team players come from MLS Next teams.

## **THE \$3000 EXPENSE OF ACADEMY SOCCER**

Town based clubs like the Beacon Soccer Club have a mission to provide low cost soccer options for the children that live within our school district and surrounding towns. So maintaining affordability is important to our club. We keep our overhead low and pass that savings onto the families of our players. Our coaches in our recreational league and travel program are all volunteers. We provide professional level training to both our rec league and travel teams through Coerver New York. Our rec league registration costs between \$100-\$150 for fall and spring soccer seasons. Our travel team registration costs between \$250 and \$350 (depending on the age).

Compare this to a regional academy, which in most cases will cost between \$3-4000 in registration fees alone (not including uniforms, travel costs, hotel costs, additional tournament costs, additional training costs). This cost covers expenses for facilities, coaches, league costs, etc. For \$3000, an club team should be playing in ECNL/RL, or MLS Next. However playing in these leagues does not mean a team is the best or that training is at a high level. Most importantly, this expense does not guarantee the successful development of a player from the ages of U9-U12.

There is just no way to ensure that a child will develop into an elite level player by the U13 level – there are just too many variables at play. So it is very hard for the BSC to justify the expense of \$3-4000 a year in registration fees for U9-U12 players.

Between U9-U14, winning tournaments and league championships simply does not matter. Except for the most elite players, college coaches are not looking at players before they get to high school. What is most important is the development of each individual player.

- Find a coach that knows and cares about their development. We have that in the BSC!
- Winning U9-U12 tournaments does not matter in the long run – the way that players and teams play is way more important at this age.
- Players should be taking risks and being creative. Dribbling is the most important skill a player should be learning.
- Be mindful of FOMO - a little over 7% of high school athletes go on to play a varsity sport at any level in college and less than 2% of high school athletes play at an NCAA Division 1 school.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL SOCCER**

For better or worse, town based travel teams find themselves existing in the hyper competitive world of youth sports. As such, we have had to find way to offer our players their developmental needs to maintain the health of our organization and maintain the ability to provide low cost soccer options for our town's youth. As such, we have embraced the reality of supplemental soccer for our players who want to train more and at a potentially higher level.



Claire Morgan (BHS '28) began her playing career as a U7 rec player. Played for the Beacon Fire travel team from U9-U14. Supplemented with Hudson Valley Academy and the Olympic Development Program. Currently plays for U16 World Class FC (ECNL RL) and for the semi-pro Hudson Valley Crusaders of the USLW. She has started for the BHS Girl's Varsity team for four years and was named All-Section and All-League in the 2025 season.



Jake Deluise and Gavin Barone played for the Beacon Blues for U9-U13 and supplemented their training with Hudson Valley Academy and the Olympic Development Program. Jake currently plays for Cedar Stars and Gavin with FC Hudson Valley. Both play varsity soccer for Beacon High School.

BSC is an affiliate of the Hudson Valley Youth Soccer League, Eastern New York Youth Soccer League and United States Youth Soccer. From the U9-U13 age groups, we can endorse and encourage that players follow the below pathways for supplemental soccer and expand their soccer horizons.

**Hudson Valley Youth Soccer Academy (est. cost = \$1200)**

A supplemental training program offered in the winter and spring seasons. This program has a competitive tryout process and then it is strictly training. “Teams” and players culminate this training with tournaments throughout the region (i.e. Hershey Cup, Seaside Classic, etc.). Click [here](#).

**Hudson Valley Premier (est. cost = \$1200)**

A supplemental regional travel team that plays in the EDP league. The games do not conflict with HVYSL league games. Click [here](#).

**Olympic Development Program (est. cost = \$800)**

A supplemental training program (for purposes of identifying players for national level play). Winter and spring training sessions lead to tournament play, as well as potential regional level and national level play. This program is run through ENYYSA and USYS. Click [here](#).

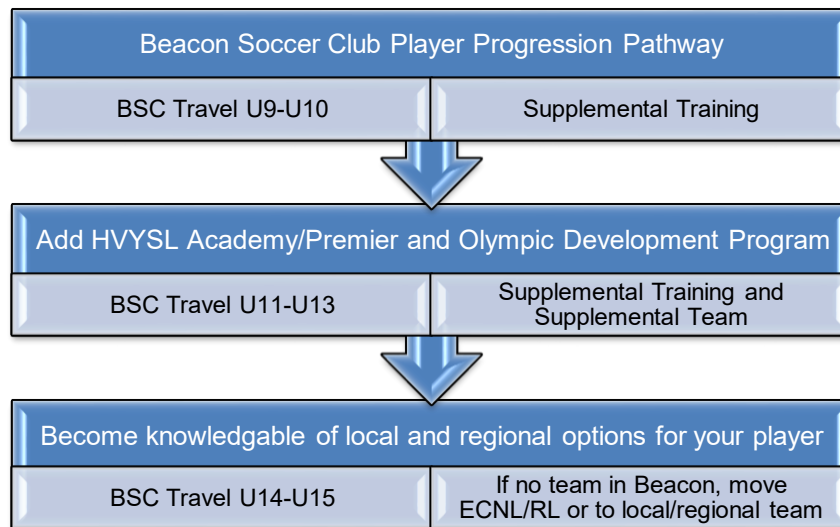
*Please keep in mind; all of this presumes the twice-weekly training that happens within the Beacon Travel program and the additional supplemental training that is offered with Coerver. Even if a family participates in all of the above programs – the yearly expense for soccer is still right around \$3000. Additionally and, unlike most clubs, BSC provides indoor soccer space to all of its travel teams for winter training.*

**OUR VISION FOR A PLAYER PROGRESSION PATHWAY**

At BSC, we have put together a pathway through our own travel program, combined with supplemental soccer that will put players into training programs to potentially become high quality varsity HS players with the potential to be competitive elite level athletes within our region. As stated earlier, one of our goals is to maintain low costs compared to for-profit academy programs as well as high quality training for our players who want more than the BSC offers. Another goal of our travel program is to keep teams together till they reach school soccer (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) at the ages U13 and U14 age groups.

*Outside of only the most elite players playing at the highest level of ECNL or MLS Next programs, we think that U9-U14 players should stay within the BSC travel program and supplement their development appropriately.*

The BSC's travel program intends to offer teams up to the U14/U15 level. At that age, players and their families can start to make an educated decision about how they should continue their soccer training – whether that is at a larger town-based travel team or a for-profit academy.



After playing Beacon travel soccer and complementing that with training and supplemental teams, we feel the U14/U15 age range is appropriate for a player to begin considering playing elsewhere. At that age, if a player is looking to move to a different club or academy, below are some sample questions you should be thinking about:

- What type of time/financial commitment does our family can/want to make to our child's soccer development?
- Does our child want to play soccer at the college level?
- How will my child develop as a player in the new program?
- Can my child be "cut" or moved down to a lower level team?
- What is the registration fee and expected travel cost?
- Is our child regularly one of the standouts on the field at their current level?
- Does my child play soccer on their own (i.e. trains in the backyard by themselves)?
- What level of soccer (realistically) is my child ready to train and play – is it a larger, local town-based club or a for-profit academy with high-level training?

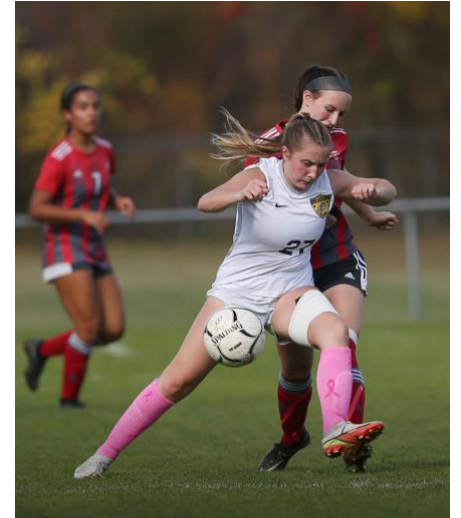
If a family has explored, from an educated perspective, where their child should play at the U14/U15 age then we can certainly encourage players to take their talents to the next level. In fact, we welcome and encourage it. As we said at the start, we have seen players thrive and succeed following the BSC pathway! Below are some current BHS Varsity players who have started in BCS program and developed along the pathway that we have put forward.



Avery Davis played for the Beacon Bombers from U9-U14. He played for Quickstrike (ECNL RL) and supplemented his playing with the Stockade FC Futures. He has been a starter for the BHS varsity team for 3 years, helping lead them to three Sectional Championships and a runner-up in the State Championship two years ago. Avery just finished his first season at SUNY Cortland.



Jaidyn Caccamo played for the Beacon Bombers from U9-U14. Jaidyn supplemented with East Hudson Academy and played for Cedar Stars and the HV Hammers (USL Youth). He helped lead BHS to three Sectional Championships and a runner-up in the State Championship. He currently plays for SUNY Brockport.



Noelle Hasse played for Beacon Bombers from U9-U13 and supplemented with various teams. She played for the Manhattan Soccer Club (ECNL RL). She was a starter for the BHS Girls Varsity Soccer team for four seasons, helping to lead them to their first League Championship in Section 9. Noelle started for the Western Connecticut State University's soccer team this past year.



Reilly Landisi played U9-U12 for the Beacon Strikers. She played with Poughkeepsie and played for the Pathfinder program. She has been a starter for the BHS Girls Varsity Soccer team for the five seasons, helping to lead them to their first League Championship in Section 9. Last season Riley received All-Section and All-State honors. Riley plays for SUNY Oneonta.



Brody Timm played in the BSC from U9-U13 for the Beacon Bombers. He currently played for the World Class FC (ECNL). He has been a starter for the BHS varsity team for 3 years, helping to lead them to three Sectional Championships and a runner-up in the State Championship two years ago. He received All-Section and All-Class honors in his senior season. Brody plays for SUNY Cortland.



Devyn Kelly played U9-U12 soccer for the Beacon Strikers. Then played for the Quickstrike (ECNL RL) program. She started for the BHS Girls Varsity Soccer team for five seasons, helping to lead them to their first League Championship in Section 9 as well as a sectional runner-up. Devyn was a main contributor to SUNY Cortland's women's teams won the SUNYAC this past season. She will play for SUNY Oneonta next season. Also plays with the semi-pro Hudson Valley

**SOME FORMER BEACON SOCCER CLUB PLAYERS WHO HAVE COMMITTED OR RECENTLY PLAYED COLLEGE SOCCER:**

Clive Stewart (BHS 2026) – SUNY Ulster  
Dylan Hetrick (BHS 2026) – Paul Smith College  
Dominick Maruggi (Our Lady of Lourdes 2026) – Regis College  
Owen Bergen (2026) – Clark University  
Aiden Spiecker (BHS 2026) – King’s College  
Tye Elias (BHS 2026) – Regis College  
Avery Davis (BHS 2025) – SUNY Cortland  
Reilly Landisi (BHS 2025) – SUNY Oneonta  
Brody Timm (BHS 2025) – SUNY Cortland  
Matt Sandison (BHS 2024) – SUNY Brockport  
Jaidyn Cacomo (BHS 2024) – SUNY Brockport  
Devyn Kelly (BHS 2024) – SUNY Cortland/SUNY Oneonta  
Enis Dika (BHS 2024) – Bridgewater State University  
Chelsea DerBoghossian (BHS 2024) – Mount Saint Mary College  
Nick Lentini (BHS 2024) – Bridgewater State University  
Gavin Ladue (BHS 2023) – SUNY Oneonta  
Dillon Kelly (BHS 2022) – SUNY Oneonta  
Tommy Franks (BHS 2022) – Manhattanville  
Alex Wyant (BHS 2022) – SUNY New Paltz  
AJ Lucas (BHS 2021) – Marist College  
Warren Banks (BHS 2021) – SUNY Brockport  
Gabby DelCastillo (BHS 2020) - University of Mount St. Vincent  
Aiden Davis (BHS 2020) – SUNY Potsdam  
Chloe Antelek (BHS 2018) – SUNY Cobleskill & Wilson College  
Matthew Wyant (BHS 2018) – Mount Saint Mary College  
Gabby Lucas (BHS 2017) – Pace University  
Kellen Sela (BHS 2017) – Baruch College