



### For Immediate Release

**MILWAUKEE, WI** - On Tuesday, April 28, 2009, the Elite Clubs National League (“ECNL”) announced the inaugural member clubs for the 2009-2010 season. The ECNL will kick-off its inaugural season at the Eclipse Select Challenge Cup August 14-16, 2009 in Chicago, IL, and will continue with year-long competition in conjunction with multiple national showcase events that culminates in the ECNL National Championship in Seattle, WA in July 2010. In addition, the ECNL will provide a subsidized player identification program for players to be scouted for youth national teams in conjunction with the US Club Soccer ID2 Program.

In 2009-2010, the ECNL season will feature 40 of the top youth girls clubs in the United States in the U15-U17 age groups competing in a 12-game season. Teams in the ECNL will compete for individual age group ECNL National Championships and an overall ECNL Club National Championship.

In each age group, teams will be placed in two flights of 20 teams each, (Challenge A and Challenge B), based on team strength. The ECNL will host stand-alone events and partner with existing national showcase events for completion of a 10-game regular season. Upon completion of a 10-game regular season, multiple four team playoff groups in each flight will be established based on the regular season standings. The top four teams in each age group in the Challenge A division will compete for the ECNL National Championship and the winner will be crowned the age group ECNL National Champion. The bottom four teams in the Challenge A division will compete in a relegation playoff where the winning team will remain in the Challenge A division for the next season and the remaining three teams will be relegated to the Challenge B division. The top four teams in the Challenge B division will compete for the promotion playoff where the top three teams will be promoted to the Challenge A division for the next season.

“The ECNL is a great step for elite girls youth players in this country,” said ECNL President Christian Lavers (FC Milwaukee). “The ECNL is founded on the concept that elite female player development in the United States needs a structure that will reduce the total number of games on the schedule and increase the number of meaningful, quality games. The ECNL sets forth a vision that gives us a clear path to that goal –a national competition schedule and a national identification program linked to that competition.”

“A great deal of work has gone into making the ECNL a reality. That, coupled with the commitment of the clubs involved, provides very exciting prospects for us all moving forward. This league is going to be something very special,” said ECNL Vice President, Doug Bracken (Ohio Elite Soccer Academy).

2009-2010 ECNL clubs include some of the most accomplished girls youth clubs in the United States: **Albertson Fury**, New York; **Arsenal FC**, California; **Atlanta Fire**, Georgia; **Bethesda SC**, Maryland; **Birmingham United**, Alabama; **CASL**, North Carolina; **CESA Premier**, South Carolina; **Challenge SC**, Texas; **Charlotte Soccer Academy**, North Carolina; **Colorado Rush**, Colorado; **Concorde Fire**, Georgia; **Connecticut FC**, Connecticut; **Crossfire Premier**, Washington; **Dallas Sting**, Texas; **D’Feeters**, Texas; **Eclipse Select**, Illinois; **FC Dallas**, Texas; **FC DELCO**, Pennsylvania; **FC Milwaukee**, Wisconsin; **FC Stars of Mass**, Massachusetts; **FC Virginia**, Virginia; **Freestate Soccer Alliance**, Maryland; **FSA SoccerPlus**, Connecticut; **Irvine Strikers**, California; **Lonestar SC**, Texas; **Minnesota Thunder**, Minnesota; **Mustang SC**, California; **Neusport FC**, Nevada; **Ohio Elite Soccer Academy**, Ohio; **Ohio Premier**, Ohio; **PDA**, New Jersey; **Pleasanton Rage**, California; **Real Colorado**, Colorado; **San Juan SC**, California; **SC Del Sol**, Arizona; **Sereno SC**, Arizona; **Solar**, Texas; **St. Louis Scott Gallagher**, Missouri; **Virginia Rush**, Virginia; **West Coast FC**, California.

The ECNL is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization and will apply for 501(c)(3) status. The ECNL is operated and managed by a Board of Directors elected by the member clubs. The member clubs will also vote on admission of new clubs, the competitive format of the league, and all league rules and policies.

For more information about Elite Clubs National League contact Christian Lavers at [Christian@fcmilwaukee.com](mailto:Christian@fcmilwaukee.com) or Doug Bracken at [dbracken@ohioelite.com](mailto:dbracken@ohioelite.com).



## Quote Sheet

### **Christian Lavers, ECNL President & FC Milwaukee Director of USSDA Programs**

*"The ECNL is a great step for elite girls youth players in this country. The ECNL is founded on the concept that elite female player development in the United States needs a structure that will reduce the total number of games on the schedule and increase the number of meaningful, quality games. The ECNL sets forth a vision that gives us a clear path to that goal –a national competition schedule and a national identification program linked to that competition."*

### **Doug Bracken, ECNL Vice President & Ohio Elite Soccer Academy Director of Coaching**

*"A great deal of work has gone into making this league a reality. That coupled with the commitment of the clubs involved provide very exciting prospects for us all moving forward. This league is going to be something very special."*

### **Rory Dames, Eclipse Select Director of Coaching**

*"The creation of the ECNL shows both the vision and dedication of the elite girls' clubs in this country to enhance the growth and development of the women's game. The Eclipse Select Soccer Club is thrilled to be at the forefront of this movement and to be able to offer its membership this incredible opportunity."*

### **Kenny Medina, Dallas Sting Director of Coaching**

*"The ECNL represents a tremendous opportunity for Sting players and coaches. The league facilitates a highly competitive environment where Sting players face off against the best teams and players in the country. The showcase events selected for the ECNL provides an unmatched opportunity for the players to gain valuable recruiting exposure and make an impression on college coaches nationwide. Furthermore, to have the Sting coaching staff involved in a highly competitive league such as the ECNL provides them the unique opportunity to consistently play against the best teams, and gain an understanding of the different aspects of top quality teams nationwide. The Sting Soccer Club is committed to providing it's players and coaches every opportunity to grow in the game of soccer. The ECNL breeds the exciting 'big game' atmosphere that fosters development and challenges both the coaches and players to perform at the highest level."*

### **Mike O'Neill, PDA Director of Coaching**

*"With the birth of the ECNL the landscape of elite girls soccer in this country will be forever changed. PDA players will have the opportunity to compete against the best while showcasing their talents in front of our national staff and the top collegiate programs in the country"*

### **Leighton Walters, FC Delco Director of Coaching**

*"FC DELCO is excited and honored to be a founding club in the ECNL. The ECNL will provide the highest level of elite girl's soccer in the country affording consistent opportunities for the best to play against the best in the critical years of a players development."*

### **Dick McCormick, Crossfire Premier Director of Coaching**

*"I am extremely excited to be a part of the ECNL. Our girls will benefit from the increased competition at the national events and the amount of exposure they will receive for colleges and potential national team opportunities."*

### **Jay Howell, CASL Director of Coaching**

*"The ECNL is a fantastic step forward for club and player development. The ECNL provides each member club the opportunity to consistently challenge their players against top competition, at the best events, with an audience of the highest level of coaches in the US."*

### **Jason Dewhurst, Stars of Mass Director of Coaching**

*"We feel the ECNL is the next step in improving elite girls soccer in the US. FC Stars are very proud to be part of such a talented group of clubs. This league will give the players the opportunity to play and develop against some of the best teams in the nation."*