



Omaha Football Club Q & A

We've tried to tackle the questions you've most likely been kicking around. In order to help you learn more about this winning opportunity, please take some time to read through our Q & A section.

When do our two clubs join forces?

We have already completed the process to unite the two clubs. When spring tryouts begin June 13, local players will be a part of **Omaha FC**.

Will we be able to keep our current club name?

It's important that we have a new name because we are taking soccer to a new level in the greater Omaha area. We want to spread the word that **Omaha FC** offers the best soccer experience at all levels from the recreational player to the elite soccer player.

Why did our club decide to make this change?

We are following a national trend in soccer circles that is seeing the dominant clubs in larger communities pooling resources. Omaha (home to the Olympic swim trials, the College World Series, and Creighton University's Morrison stadium) understands the community benefit of supporting and putting its weight behind serious efforts at athletic excellence. We want to provide the most enjoyable and most effective soccer training program in the region. On the player level, it's time for Arsenal and Gladiator to stop 'throwing stones at each other over the fence each year, exchanging state cup titles and battling each other over recruiting. "Enough of the madness," we've said. "Let's work together."

Who will be coaching in my child's age group next year?

The short answer? Only the best and most competent coaches in the city!

This is where parents and players will immediately see the benefits of being a part of **Omaha FC**. We've done the research, looked at the best teams nationwide, and without doubt the group approach to coaching is the most effective model. **Omaha FC** is adopting this team approach which means you'll have an Age Group Coordinator and more. The AGCs will surround himself/herself with the best coaches from each club. Your players will be coached by the entire group, giving them the benefit of the most proficient coaches in the city. This is really helpful because we all know that players can benefit from a variety of coaching styles. Best of all, a group approach assures that no players will fall through the cracks. All of the coaches are looking to make all of the teams and players the strongest they can be.

Every player, from A team to E team, gets to learn from the same top quality coaching staff with top quality training. The bottom line for players is an increased skill level at a more accelerated pace, improving the chances of "bumping up."



Merger sounds great for the select players and may well make us even more competitive than we already are on local and regional levels, but does this really impact the recreational player?

Yes and No. The coaches of most recreational teams will tell you that the chief obstacle they face is the wide diversity of skill levels on their teams, making it difficult to run an effective training session and making game day management a real challenge with so many skill levels in one group. Merging two clubs of our size will allow a higher degree of “matching” (i.e.: the pooling of that various skill levels so that players are training and playing games with peers of roughly the same ability level). Having said that, the recreational player who simply wants a weekly training session from a parent volunteer and a weekend game against local competition should see only minor changes.

We consider most athletes in the U4-U10 age groups to be “recreational” by virtue of the fact that they do not go through tryouts. You will, nonetheless, feel an impact at those age groups. Rather than relying solely on volunteer coaches who may never have played the game, in the U5-U8 Youth Development Program (YDP) we will also make use of qualified trainers who have played at a collegiate level and are license qualified. The volunteer coaches and the trainers will work together to provide the appropriate level of instruction and training.

At the U9/U10 age group we've introduced two programs: The Academy and The Academy Lite. The latter is for that athlete interested in one practice and game per week under the direction of volunteer coaches (at a lower cost). These athletes won't experience much change as a result of merger other than periodic training sessions under the guidance of the program director. We will, however, stress the need for coaches at this level to get youth coaching licensing and in-house training to provide training to their players in conjunction with the club mission.

The Academy, on the other hand, will see the introduction of training by pro coaches. Under the direction of Program Director Matt Sahag (former assistant club DOC, D1 college player, and USSF “B” License) these athletes will receive training twice a week from high level coaches with the goal of significantly increasing the technical skill and the size of the talent pool from which we draw our U11 select teams. Parents have asked for this progressive approach to accelerating development and this Academy addresses that need. So while these kids may still be considered “recreational” by nature of their age, they are essentially beginning to receive the high level training that our select players are enjoying.

Will the cost go up?

The cost will be comparable to what Gladiator and Arsenal currently charge for the various age groups at the different levels (premier, developmental, recreational, etc.). The only exception is that the cost of the U9/U10 Academy will be slightly higher than what the Gladiator parents have paid in the past. As discussed above, this additional cost covers the higher level of training that those in the Academy will now receive. For those who wish to avoid this additional cost, **Omaha FC** offers the Academy Lite.



There will be one other change for Gladiator parents - registration fees, coach's fees, and indoor training costs are all bundled into the same package price. You will no longer be charged \$3 here and \$5 there for winter practice time.

Omaha FC will offer a payment plan for those families wishing to take advantage of it.

Where will my child practice/train?

On the U4 through U8 levels, training will still be based on geographical location. Therefore, if you live on the north side of town you will most likely train at our facilities on the north side of town. At the U9/10 level, many sessions will be held at the Omaha Sports Complex on the west side of town.

For the U11 and above select teams, training locations will be based on the caliber and geographical make up of the team. **Omaha FC** will have venues at Weircrest, Discovery, Chalco, Millard Star and one or two other sites we are still working on. In the winter, the Club will use the UNO Dome and the Omaha Sports Complex.

Will there only be two teams in my child's age group next year? Currently, there are five teams between the two clubs.

We want your kids "In Play!" **Omaha FC** has no limit on the number of teams. By setting the standard for best practices, we expect to see new players at every level. Each and every player will have the opportunity to develop his or her skills.

Example: Gladiator has 3 teams at U11 boys and Arsenal has 2 teams at U11 boys. Coming out of the tryout we would expect to create 5 teams, A and B (Elite Program) and C, D and E (Gold Program). The prices and options differ between the programs as expected.

Will my child have the same coach as they did last year?

For many of the select teams, the answer is "yes." But you want the best for your kids, right? So do we. That's why we've strengthened the coaching core by making a few changes. We guarantee your child will be tutored by a group of outstanding coaches, plus they'll greatly benefit from their combined experience and coaching styles.

In nearly all instances, the U11 and above recreational teams will keep their volunteer coaches.

How are coaches chosen at Omaha FC?

Coaches at **Omaha FC** are selected by the Directors of Coaching based on past experience, licensing, and parent-player feedback. Select level teams will have top level, compensated coaches. Recreational level teams will have volunteer coaches, many of whom are licensed.

How and when will tryouts take place?

Omaha FC will hold tryouts June 13-15 (U11 and U12) and June 27-29 (U13 and above). Venues and schedules will be posted approximately May 7th on the Nebraska State Soccer Association website: www.nebraskasoccer.org.



How will select teams be formed for fall of 2009?

The AGC and his or her staff will use the spring to observe players at both clubs, making final decisions during the **Omaha FC** tryout period in June. You'll see some combined training sessions between the two clubs this spring, and you'll see coaches paying close attention to players at the **Omaha FC** summer camps.

What if my child doesn't make the select team I feel they should be on?

Great question! (with or without a merger). Up until now, neither club had the depth to go A through E at the select level. However, when combined, we will. Prior to merger, a child wishing to play select soccer who was best suited to a C team had to switch to another club's B team to find a home. This is no longer the case. We will have enough teams for each and every player. In a word, depth! But here's the best part, the C team player isn't getting a C level coach. The C team player will have not only the best coaches in town training him or her but will also receive training from the AGC, the #1 guy or girl!

We are realists. We know that there are always disagreements between parent and coach over placement on select teams during tryout time. Our combined strength will create a scenario where our B teams may very likely have a higher skill set than most A teams from other clubs, or our C teams will be competitive with most clubs' B teams. Strength in numbers, right?

Will I have to buy my child a new uniform?

Sure, but you'd have to do this anyway since both Arsenal and Gladiator were at the end of their 3-year contracts with Adidas. Basically, Adidas had already stopped production on the existing uniforms.

Omaha FC's colors and logo have been designed into a uniform that creates a professional, winning look - one that the kids will take pride in wearing.

The players in the U4-U8 age groups will need to purchase a new uniform that includes a reversible jersey, shorts, and socks (not made by Adidas) in the new club colors.

Who will run Omaha FC?

The **Omaha FC** will be represented by a volunteer board made up of equal parts (4 members from each organization). The club will benefit from the joint oversight of Directors of Coaching Alex Mason and John Keating.

Other club administrative roles and program directors include:

Pam Sweeney, Registrar

Jason McClanathan and Karl Ostrand, Directors of Operations

Matt Sahag , Academy and Academy Lite Director (U9/U10)

Jeff Oksman, Youth Development Director (U5-U8)

Christina Lewis, Kickstart Director (U4)



What leagues will we play in?

At our Academy level (U9/U10) players will participate in 10-week “semesters” offered in the spring, winter and fall. In the third week of each semester, we'll replace the two practices that week with games instead of training and finish the whole 'semester' with a small sided game festival. The games during the semester will be a combination of in-house games, games against other local teams and games against out of state teams invitees that we bring in to play our Academy kids. The Academy Lite players will most likely continue to play in local or in-house leagues.

The U11 and above teams will play in one of several leagues depending on level: recreational (ENSA), select (NSA or MRL). Nothing too different here than what you are used to. Special note: MRL begins at U14 for only the boys' and girls' Elite teams.

What development opportunities will be available?

Where to start?! From juggling, dribbling and striking to tactics, regional play and college preparation, our development plan is comprehensive and complete. It helps to see the entire layout from start to finish. So here's how it looks from U4 to U19:

Kickstart (U4): Under the leadership of Christina Lewis, we introduce U4s to the enjoyment of soccer and familiarity with the ball. She is assisted by a variety of individuals and the kids really take to their mentorship.

YDP (U5-U8): Our youth development program (YDP) is the best around. It comes right from the pages of the national programs on player development but also blends in some creative Brazilian methodology and is very game centered. For the hourly rate you pay your babysitter, this program offers players training and games twice a week under the direction of our professional coaches, all of whom have played at a high level. This program offers arguably our biggest 'bang for the buck'.

The Academy (U9/U10): Having said that, the Academy ranks up there in terms of cost-benefit. It is directed by Matt Sahag, D1 player (Drake), club professional and his staff of paid coaches including many former D1 players. They work with athletes hands-on twice a week and these same coaches oversee their game weeks too. Here's our philosophy for this age group: take a hands-on development approach with the kids at this golden age of learning and you are going to develop scores of technically skillful players to send up to the next level, i.e. U11 select.

The Academy Lite (U9/U10): Not everyone shares the above commitment. For these athletes and parents who are less inclined to dedicate two outings a week (including winter months) to soccer, we have this program that offers fewer sessions at a reduced cost.

Non-Select (U11+): From U11 through U18, **Omaha FC** will support the desire of those athletes who simply want a practice and a game once a week. No more, no less. No travel. No fuss. And at an affordable rate that basically helps us cover costs. If these athletes want to get a step ahead of their peers and do supplemental training they can join the highly successful Friday night FastFootWork Program originated by co-Director of Coaching John Keating.



Select (U11+): Divided into three tiers, Elite (A and B team), Gold, and Silver, this program offers training two to three times per week, overseen by the Age Group Coordinator and his or her staff. It promises excellent training year-round at first rate facilities. It will group the best players in town and give these players an opportunity not only to sweep the local competition (which the two clubs already do with few exceptions) but also to make their mark on the regional and national stage. Let's give Omaha a regional reputation as a soccer powerhouse, and complement some of the wonderful accomplishments already happening on the collegiate level (Creighton, Bellevue, Hastings 2008 accolades).

The players on the Gold and Silver levels will be given every resource to improve their game including access to strength and conditioning programs, first rate coaching, fast footwork programs and indoor leagues.

The biggest benefit of this program is the pooling of players, i.e. matching players up with players of similar ability. This creates a competitive training environment where players challenge one another and get better in the process. Matching up the various teams with the most suitable leagues will be an important part of this process from a player-parent satisfaction point of view.

Can teams do fundraising for team expenses?

Yes, teams are allowed to fund raise to pay expenses for their team through approved fund raisers.

Will Omaha FC pay for coaching licenses?

Yes, **Omaha FC** will continue to pay for coaches who pass continuing education. All coaches are expected to hold licenses commensurate with the level of play they are coaching.

What is the financial condition of Omaha FC?

Although **Omaha FC** continues a long legacy of success of both Gladiator and Arsenal, **Omaha FC** is a completely separate legal entity which was created on January 15, 2009. Both Gladiator and Arsenal have retained all of their separate assets and liabilities and those obligations have not been assumed by **Omaha FC** in any way whatsoever. From a financial standpoint, **Omaha FC** starts with a clean slate with no carryover from either Arsenal or Gladiator.

What about the ownership of the Omaha Sports Complex (the Center)?

Ownership of the Omaha Sports Complex has remained with Arsenal as have all other matters relating to its operation, management, and finances. **Omaha FC** believes that the Center is the premier indoor soccer facility in the Midwest and is committed to using the Center as its primary indoor training facility. However, **Omaha FC** will not be involved in the Center's operation or finances in any way.



I've heard other rumors about changes in local clubs and in our association. What else is going on?

We've heard the same rumors about smaller clubs merging, but we can't confirm them nor is it any of our business. We wish these clubs well and respect their efforts to develop athletes. We can appreciate that this merger poses significant challenges to their ability to remain competitive and affordable but this city has been ripe for a consolidation of players for going on a decade and we happen to be the pioneers that are taking a progressive approach to player development.

Seems to me you guys are getting carried away with this. It's just soccer, right?

In Omaha, soccer competes with several other youth activities and as such, whether we like it or not, we are participating in the service industry. Parents are prepared to pay a significant portion of their discretionary income to see their children enjoy and develop at this sport. The parents and the athletes are consumers. We (the coaches and club leaders) are service providers. And so we aim to please, and aim to make progress, and constantly look for ways to deliver a better product (enjoyment through development and team participation).

What if you haven't answered my question?

To address all remaining inquiries and to further promote the benefits of membership, we are holding membership meetings for all parents, coaches and players Monday, May 4, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the La Vista Hotel & Conference Center, 12520 Westport Parkway, (near Cabela's). In addition, feel free to contact us at info@OmahaFC.com.