



CREW JUNIORS PRESS RELEASE

CREW JUNIORS AND WORTHINGTON UNITED ANNOUNCE NEW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Highly successful local youth club partners with Crew Juniors to create Worthington Crew Juniors

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Crew Juniors, the Columbus Crew's youth development club, and Worthington United Soccer Club announced today a formal partnership to create the best environment, opportunity and experience for youth players throughout central Ohio. The partnership begins with the 2008 tryouts that got underway Monday and run through June 6.

The Crew, with a long history of firsts, has been considered one of the most creative and successful organizations in soccer for the last 13 years, while Worthington United is one of the Ohio South Youth Soccer Association's most decorated clubs. Worthington United teams have had tremendous success this spring, highlighted by four State Cup semifinalists and two Ohio South State Champions at the U-13 and U-17 levels.

Worthington United's Director of Coaching, former Crew midfielder Billy Thompson, remains a key figure in the integrated organization. He is expected to have responsibilities with both the Crew Juniors Gold and Worthington Crew Juniors teams.

The teams, which will train primarily in Worthington, will play under the Crew Juniors banner and wear the club's familiar Black & Gold color scheme. At the U-12 age groups and above, one Crew Juniors Gold team will be formed on both the boys and girls sides in 2008. The Worthington Crew Juniors will field both boys and girls teams from the U-8/9 through U-18 age groups. Their coaching staffs will be made up of excellent role models from both former Worthington United and Crew Juniors staffs.

"This is another very positive step for our youth development program, and an opportunity to continue to share our resources with a broader base of quality players," said Crew VP of Soccer Business Development Andrew Arthurs. "It's a great fit on a number of levels. Billy (Thompson) obviously understands what's necessary to play at the highest levels in the United States, has done a tremendous job with Worthington United, is focused on the right things, and absolutely appreciates the value that our Crew coaches, players and facilities bring to the player development experience. We're very excited to have a partner who shares our priorities and long-term commitment to the game."

Thompson, the 2005 Ohio South Youth Soccer Association Boys' Coach of the Year, appeared in 75 games for the Crew from 1996-99, scoring four goals and assisting on 18 others. He was also a college teammate of former Crew stars Mike Lapper, Brad Friedel and Chris Henderson on current Crew Head Coach – and Crew Juniors Director of Coaching – Sigi Schmid's 1990 NCAA-champion UCLA Bruins.

"We're very much looking forward to aligning with the Columbus Crew and the Crew Juniors," Thompson said. "It's a great opportunity to grow the game and provide an enhanced experience for our players. We expect a very positive, long-term partnership."

Crew Juniors Mission Statement

The Crew Juniors were formed to create the premier youth player development program in Major League Soccer. We strive to assemble the finest coaching staff and to be committed to their long-term development through continuing education. We commit to establishing an outstanding learning environment for young people, on and off of the field. We pledge to run the Crew Juniors organization with a sense of community, and a commitment to give back to the game and assist with its growth at all levels.