



CHARLOTTE INDEPENDENCE SOCCER CLUB

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Carolina Rapids Soccer Club, Discoveries Soccer Club and Lake Norman Merge to Form Charlotte Independence Soccer Club

Merging of three Charlotte area clubs makes CISC one of the biggest in the country

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Carolina Rapids, Discoveries Soccer Club and Lake Norman Soccer Club have merged to form one club, and will be called Charlotte Independence Soccer Club (CISC), it was announced Tuesday.

The move makes Charlotte Independence Soccer Club one of the biggest clubs in the country, and its affiliation with the Charlotte Independence of the United Soccer League (USL) affords players access to a professional club infrastructure that officials say will benefit players from Recreation through Development Academy (DA).

Thomas Finlay, the Rapids Executive Director who will be Chief Executive Officer of CISC, said the driving force behind the merge had little to do with numbers and more about changing the face of soccer in greater Charlotte.

"By connecting the three youth clubs with the professional structure of the Charlotte Independence, benefits to greater Charlotte area and the city will be immediate," he said. "There's definitely not many clubs in the country with close to 12,000 players, but that's not our focus; we are truly committed to providing a benefit to all players for every program as well as improving the overall environment for members, staff, referees and the communities we represent."

Jim McPhilliamy, owner and President of the Independence, said the move aligns with the Club's long-term efforts to grow the game in its Charlotte backyard — and nationally.

"Our goal with our entry into the youth soccer is to build upon that history of success and develop players for the U.S. National Team, our Charlotte Independence first team, for collegiate programs and to offer competitive soccer to kids who want to compete, and be part of something they can be proud to be a part of," explained McPhilliamy of the Independence, a Division II league sanctioned by the U.S. Soccer Federation and Canadian Soccer Association.

With a bigger pool of players, coaches and directors can expect to build stronger, more balanced teams, something Dave Carton, formerly the Executive Director of Rock Hill, S.C.-based Discoveries SC, is pleased to know.

"We all felt that this would be an amazing opportunity for our players to have the chance to come together as one, pooling all of our resources and networks, to create the best environment possible for our players," explained Carton, who will be CISC's Technical Director.

Chad Metzler, Lake Norman Soccer Club's Executive Director, who will be Chief Operating Officer, agreed: "One of our biggest goals is to create a stronger sense of community, both locally and throughout the entire club. Being

aligned with the Charlotte Independence provides us a higher quality of programming and player development at the local level and makes player pathways more accessible to everyone.”

“As we look forward to our first year as one club, we expect very little impact on practice locations and staff,” added Finlay, who acknowledges the support of corporate partners adidas, soccer.com and Novant Health. “Our boys DA, boys ECNL, boys NPL, girls ECNL and girls NPL will be the only teams considered for immediate integration.”

Adrian Brooks, representative with adidas noted, “The joining of these clubs, community and staff, is a phenomenal step in changing the game in Charlotte and the surrounding areas. We look forward to supporting this community with a long term agreement and are eager to see what is ahead.”

Finlay added that the uptick in numbers might bring about some uncertainty from members, but he added that there is a team in place to ensure that the transition goes smoothly. “We will have a project management team overseeing the integration of programs, communications, and staff -- as well as policies and procedures,” said Finlay, who added that the club's website will have additional information about the merge, and that town hall meetings to discuss and answer other questions are also being planned.

ABOUT CHARLOTTE INDEPENDENCE SOCCER CLUB

Established in 2019—after the Carolina Rapids, Discoveries Soccer Club and Lake Norman Soccer Clubs merged—Charlotte Independence Soccer Club (CISC) has over 12,000 members – serving Recreation, Competitive, Boys U.S. Development Academy, Boys Elite Club's National League (ECNL), Girls ECNL and Adult Recreation. CISC's mission is to develop, promote and administer the game of soccer using key values of character, commitment, community, competition, and communication as the guiding principles to provide exceptional experience, while also developing and promoting life lessons and values. CISC locations in Belmont, Cabarrus, Denver, Gastonia, Mooresville, North Meck, South Charlotte, Statesville, Steele Creek, as well as Fort Mill and Rock Hill, South Carolina. For more information, visit the club's web home at www.independencesoccer.club, Facebook @cltindependencesoccerclub, Twitter and Instagram @independence_sc.

ABOUT CHARLOTTE INDEPENDENCE

The Charlotte Independence team joined the United Soccer League (USL) Championship as an expansion team in September 2014. An ownership group led by Jim McPhilliamy, the President & Managing Partner of Major League Lacrosse's Charlotte Hounds, acquired the USL franchise rights from the Charlotte Eagles. The Independence plays its home games at the Sportsplex at Matthews. For details on the upcoming season and Season Memberships, visit www.charlotteindependence.com or call 704-206-1515.