

# YOUTH SOCCER PATHWAY IN SOUTH FLORIDA

A STEP BY STEP ROADMAP FOR PARENTS AND PLAYERS FROM RECREATIONAL  
SOCCER TO COLLEGE AND PRO.

## Ages 3–6: Introduction to Soccer

**Goal:** Fun, movement, and basic motor skills

**Programs:** Mommy & Me classes, recreational “Little Kickers”

**Focus:** Dribbling, fun games, basic coordination

**Tip:** Look for a program that emphasizes enjoyment, not competition

1

## Ages 6–9: Recreational Soccer

**Goal:** Learn rules, teamwork, and basic techniques

**Clubs:** Local city leagues or community rec programs

**Training:** 1–2 times/week + weekend games

**Leagues:** AYSO, YMCA, Parks & Rec

**Tip:** No tryouts required—perfect for beginners or multi-sport kids

2

## Ages 8–12: Competitive Club Soccer (Travel Teams)

**Goal:** Player development and more advanced coaching

**Clubs:** Independent clubs, travel teams, academies

**Training:** 2–3 times/week + tournaments

**Leagues:** USYS, FYSA, SFUYSA, EDP, and NPL

**Tryouts:** Usually held in May or June

**Tip:** Look for qualified coaches, player development plans, and cost transparency

3

## Ages 11–14: Advanced Leagues & Player Pathways Begin

**Goal:** Sharpen skills, begin long-term development pathway

**Leagues:** ECNL Regional, NPL, FCL, and State Cup

**Development focus:** Technical, tactical, physical, and mental

**College prep begins:** Start collecting game film and performance data

**Tip:** Choose clubs that offer visibility to scouts and long-term growth

4

## Ages 13–17: Elite Programs & Exposure Opportunities

**Goal:** Compete at highest level & gain college/pro visibility

**Leagues:**

ECNL (Boys & Girls – top-tier national platform)

MLS NEXT (boys-only, elite pathway to professional academies)

USL Academy (pre-pro development)

**Events:** Showcases, ID camps, State/National team tryouts

**Tip:** Performance matters—but attitude, work ethic, and character stand out too

5

## Ages 16+: College & Pro Opportunities

**Paths:**

College Soccer (NCAA, NAIA, JUCO)

Pro Academies (MLS, USL, international trials)

Scholarships & scouting: Begin emailing coaches, attending ID camps, and creating highlight videos

**Tip:** Start early—recruitment often begins in 10th grade

6

### What Parents Should Know

- It's a marathon, not a sprint—focus on development, not early results
  - Coaching quality is more important than club name
- Emotional support and balance are key to long-term success
  - Exposure matters—but preparation matters more



For more guides and tools, visit  
[www.southfloridasoccerclubs.com](http://www.southfloridasoccerclubs.com)