



## Villarreal CF launches US-based soccer Academy in Virginia

### *The partnership between Villarreal CF and Annandale United FC presents a unique pathway for youth soccer players*

May 4th, 2018 – Villarreal Club de Fútbol, one of Spain’s biggest LaLiga soccer clubs, announced the launch of its first official US-based youth soccer Academy to be named Villarreal Virginia CF Academy. The Villarreal Virginia CF Academy (VIVA) is located in Annandale, Virginia. Villarreal CF technical directors and coaches from Spain will direct VIVA’s soccer training, utilizing Villarreal’s established philosophy for developing players. Villarreal CF will also invite players that excel to train with Villarreal CF’s Academy teams in Spain.

Villarreal CF Spain has selected Annandale United FC to manage the administration of the VIVA Academy and its teams. Annandale United will be renaming its youth teams as Annandale Boys and Girls Club (ABGC) Villarreal Academy VA and immediately transition to official Villarreal uniforms. Teams will be available to players of all ages and abilities.

“We are very excited and proud to bring Villarreal CF to the United States to open the gateway for Villarreal CF to be exposed to opportunities in American soccer and vice versa,” said Juan Antón, Director of International Development at Villarreal CF. “We have seen the huge growth of soccer in the United States and we are aware that many talented players are being developed all over the country. We have formed a partnership with Annandale United FC because we are very impressed with their professionalism, enthusiasm and quality development that they provide their players with. Directors of the club, Bo Amato and Carlos Aranda, demonstrated an unparalleled desire to support our vision and commitment to provide opportunities for all players. We look forward to being able to scout players at Villarreal Virginia CF and are convinced our partnership with Annandale United FC will bring great benefits to players from both clubs.”

Members of staff from Spain’s Villarreal CF will be on-site to provide technical direction, training, education and team coaching to the Villarreal CF Virginia Academy players. As part of the curriculum, VIVA Academy players will be encouraged to watch and learn from both LaLiga and other European club matches, with interactive direction and instruction from Villarreal CF coaching directors. While in Spain, players will attend live professional matches at Villarreal’s stadium, the Estadio de la Ceramica. Players and alumni with outstanding attitude, behavior and ability, will be invited to Villarreal CF Training Ground (Ciudad Deportiva) in Spain to experience training and trialing with one of the best youth academies in the world.

“Villarreal CF Virginia Academy provides youth players with a complete professional club development experience,” said **Bo Amato**, AUFC Technical Director. “This is the first true European professional club Academy in the United States where the pro club is actively involved in developing players and providing a pathway for youth players in the

United States. Our players will benefit from Villarreal CF coaches coming to the US to train and coach both our teams and our coaches. Their coaches will work directly with our coaching staff here in Virginia to run player clinics, team training sessions, coach education programs and camps. I am confident that the benefits the players will derive from this unique European experience will only improve our long-standing track record of advancing players to top collegiate soccer programs.”

“We are honored to be a part of this amazing opportunity for our players, coaches and families,” said **Carlos Aranda**, AUFC Boys Director of Coaching. “This partnership will enable us to provide the best training programs and opportunities to our players, and I am really looking forward to introducing the Villarreal CF development philosophy to lead our coaching staff. Our ultimate goal is for each player in our club to grow as a person, love soccer and experience a real opportunity to break through to a college and/or professional career if that is their goal.”

Villarreal CF is a Spanish soccer club whose top professional team plays in LaLiga, Spain’s top-flight. Notably, Villarreal CF has competed in the UEFA Champions League, reaching the semi-finals as their best performance, and regularly competes strongly in the UEFA Europa League. The Villarreal CF Academy is one of the top youth development programs in the world and is committed to identifying and developing talent in Spain, all over Europe, South America, Asia and now in the United States too. Villarreal CF, also known as the ‘Yellow Submarine’, provides professional support at all levels of the game. Each level of player development is designed with the purpose of providing the best development opportunities to players and coaches. The Yellow’s Academy teams are consistently ranked among the top programs in Spain and Villarreal youngsters regularly make appearances for Spain’s national teams at all ages.

**LaLiga:** The First Division (Primera División), commonly known as LaLiga, or LaLiga Santander for sponsorship reasons, is the top professional soccer division in the Spanish league system.

For more information about Villarreal CF visit: <https://www.villarrealcf.es/en/>

### **About Annandale United FC – Annandale Boys & Girls Club, Inc.**

Annandale United FC is part of the Annandale Boys & Girls Club, Inc. It is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide any child with the opportunity to play soccer at the highest level that corresponds to their level of interest, ability and potential. AUFC are committed to offering a positive learning environment that delivers on-going player development and prepares players for success in life and on the soccer field. Over the years, AUFC has assisted in placing 100’s of players collegiately, and several professionally. Some have even gone on to play with the US National Team’s, both men and women. ABGC Club President Kip Germain played professionally with several teams including the NASL’s Washington Diplomats

For more information about Annandale United FC visit: [www.annandaleunitedfc.com](http://www.annandaleunitedfc.com)

For more information about Villarreal Virginia Academy visit:  
<http://villarrealvirginia.com>

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