

The start of the Elite Clubs National League (ECNL - Girls) and US Soccer Development Academy (Boys) seasons are coming up. This week, rushsoccer.com will run a series of Season Preview articles for the Rush clubs participating in these Elite leagues. First up, the ECNL Girls from Colorado.

The ECNL teams from Colorado Rush kick off their season Saturday, September 1st hosting Heat FC of Nevada. Below, Colorado Rush Director of Academy, Wes Hart, previews the season.



2011/2012 Season Recap:

Colorado Rush finished an impressive 7th place out of 66 teams in the 2011-12 ECNL Overall Club Championships. Colorado Rush's '97 Nike team (at right) won the club's first ever ECNL Title when they knocked off Ohio Elite, Eclipse, PDA, and Dallas Sting at last summer's U15 ECNL National Championships. This team also won the Mountain West Conference finishing 10 points clear of second place Sereno. The Colorado Rush '95 Nike team also won the Mountain West Conference and finished 11th overall in the U17 ECNL National Championships. The '96 team finished second place in the Mountain West Conference.

Club expectations for the upcoming season:

Colorado Rush ECNL is determined to crack the top 5 in the 2012-13 ECNL Overall Club Championships. The loss of Lindsey Horan (to Paris St Germain) and her '94 Nike team will not make things easy, but the Rush girls are ready for the challenge. Four of the five ECNL teams (U14-18) won championships at Denver Cup or Arsenal Cup earlier this month. The U18's lost two key players to graduation but have picked up a couple good replacements, including Discovery Player Darian Jenkins (Utah). With the addition of Jenkins, this team bolsters seven players in the Women's U17 National Team Pool.

The U17's were one of the hottest teams in the ECNL last fall. Injuries to some key players hurt them down the stretch as they failed to qualify for the National Championships. If they remain healthy, look for this team to make the playoffs.

Similar to the 18's, the U16's are loaded with players with US National Team experience. The addition of Lexi Hill (from Rival Real Colorado) gives this team five players that have been called into US National Team Camps. The defending ECNL National Champions are poised for the repeat. [Check out this feature](#) on the 16's from TopDrawerSoccer.com.

The U15's are getting their first "real" taste of ECNL. Last year they played an abbreviated schedule of just 10 games. They finished fourth place in the 8-team Mountain West Conference. They've added 8 new players that will surely help this team compete for a Conference Championship.

The U14's have several players with ECNL experience, as four of them participated in ECNL competitions last season. They will need to finish in first or second in their conference to qualify for the U14 ECNL National Championships next

summer.

Who is the 'Team to Beat'?:

U14- Colorado Storm Copa. This team has been a thorn in Rush's side in CYS League and State Cup over the years. Last time these two teams met, Storm Copa won 2-1 in OT in the Rush Open Final.

U15- Real Colorado. This team won the U14 Mountain West Conference Championship last year, before losing to Crossfire at the ECNL National Championships.

U16- Dallas Sting. Rush defeated Sting 3-2 in the San Antonio National Event and 1-0 in the ECNL National Championships. Sting is surely looking forward for another chance at Rush.

U17- Sereno. Last year's Mountain West Conference Champion. Rush tied and defeated Sereno last fall, but still managed to finish behind them in the Mountain West Conference Standings.

U18- CASL. Winners of last year's U17 ECNL National Championships. CO Rush defeated CASL at U16, the only time these two teams have met. If Rush is going to win an ECNL Championship this season, they will need to get by CASL.

Rush Players to Watch:

U14 -Cam Dyke: Received her first [National Team call up](#) earlier this month. Has ECNL experience, appearing in games with last year's U14's, U15's, and U17's.

U15- Megan Delmonico (MD): Delmonico is a tenacious defender that will anchor Rush's backline. With so many new faces, Delmonico will need to step up and lead this team.

U16- Jastin Redman: This speedy forward can do it all, including score goals! She lead the team in goals scored and was selected to the ECNL All-Event Team in San Diego.

U17- Britt Stark: Scored 12 goals in just 10 games before an ACL tear sidelined her for the season. Stark is one of the most dynamic forwards in the country and has verbally committed to CU.

U18- Danica Evans: Should be beaming with confidence after touring London this summer with the [ECNL All-Star team](#) and scoring a goal vs. the Doncaster Belles. Evans led the team in goals scored last season and was selected to the ECNL All-Event Team in San Diego.

Thoughts on the upcoming season:

"We are excited about the upcoming season. We did well last year finishing 7th overall as a club. We have set high goals for ourselves this year and plan on being in the top five. We expect all five of our teams to qualify for the playoffs and will be disappointed if a couple of those teams don't qualify for Nationals. We are loaded with talent. Fourteen of our players have been called into US National Team Camps in the past year. Our players are doing some very good things and people are taking notice."

2012/13 Game Schedules:

[U14](#)

[U15](#)

[U16](#)

[U17](#)

[U18](#)

Stay tuned to www.coloradorush.com for ECNL updates throughout the season.

Tuesday's preview: Virginia Rush ECNL.