



Whitecaps FC and Manitoba Soccer Association extend player development partnership through 2026

WINNIPEG, MB – Vancouver Whitecaps FC and the Manitoba Soccer Association (MSA) announced on Wednesday an extension of their player development partnership through 2026.

“It’s an exciting time for the sport in Canada with the World Cup coming in 2026,” said Axel Schuster, Whitecaps FC chief executive officer. “We are very pleased to continue working with the Manitoba Soccer Association to benefit players and coaches throughout the province with a pathway to reach their goals.”

The partnership, which originally began in 2015, will continue to provide a pathway to the professional club environment in Vancouver through the full-time, fully funded Whitecaps FC Boys MLS Academy and the Girls Elite Academy, a Canada Soccer National Development Centre.

Whitecaps FC helped launch the career of stalwart Canada women's national team midfielder, and Winnipeg's own, Desiree Scott. Most recently, Winnipeg's Samantha Powell was selected to join the Whitecaps FC Girls Elite Academy in Vancouver. On the men's side, the pathway has also seen players such as Marco Bustos, Kianz Froese, and Georges Mukumbilwa move from Manitoba to Vancouver, and on to professional careers.

“We are pleased to have a strong relationship with Whitecaps FC that allows for us to establish great opportunities for the players in Manitoba to grow in their respective pathways,” added Hector Vergara, MSA executive director. “We know the players in Manitoba will put their best foot forward to benefit from this partnership. In addition, we appreciate the professional development opportunities for our coaches to continue to learn.”

The Whitecaps FC Manitoba BMO Academy Centre provides local talent a pathway to professional soccer, scholarships, and Canadian national teams. Based out of Winnipeg and run by MSA staff, Whitecaps FC provide program curriculum and development supported by staff visits.

Local pathway programs include the U13 to U17 Boys and Girls REX Prospects Program. BMO Academy players earn opportunities to showcase their talent at Player ID events including the Academy Centre Showcase and the High Potential Player (HPP) program, which can lead to full-time funded places at the Boys MLS Academy and Girls Elite Academy programs in Vancouver.

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