

WINTER PROGRAMMING INSTRUMENTAL TO DEVELOPMENT

FFC offers multiple options to make that possible

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It's that time of year when the weather shifts to colder temperatures and having training outdoors isn't the most viable option.

"The Pitch" talked with Fredericksburg FC Technical Director Mayowa Owolabi about the options the club offers for current members of the club, as well as those that are not currently members.



FFC is well prepared for those times thanks to its agreement with Fredericksburg Christian School, a great facility that allows the club to add more options to its winter programming. The school is also located just minutes away from FFC Park, which gives an added bonus of familiarity of the area to FFC families.

"The partnership we have with FCS is fantastic. For us to have access to two gym courts to run our futsal programming is wonderful," said FFC Technical Director Mayowa Owolabi. "Without this partnership our futsal cost would also be much higher as court fees around the area are extremely high so we are benefitting a lot with having access to FCS."

Getting touches on the ball during the winter months is vital to any players continued development. Having indoor training options is very important, especially here in Virginia when the weather can often shift from day to day to day . . .



"Here in Virginia it gets cold and when it gets cold/snowing some kids just hang up the boots and don't touch the ball until March. The winter time should be a time where players stay focused and continue to get touches on the ball and keep up with their fitness," Owolabi added. "Players who train through the winter should be entering the spring season with a perfected touch and without missing a beat."

Futsal in particular is a wonderful way to make that happen as proven by so many top-quality professional players that played the game during their youth and have continued to use during their own off-season training.

“Futsal is the part of the game that has developed some of the best technical players to ever play this game. Top players from Brazil all played futsal and you can tell the players who have participated in futsal. They are very creative on the ball and their touch is fantastic,” Owolabi said. “The high speed of futsal with the heavier ball allows players to fine tune their technical approach, creative mind and speed of play with the ball on their feet. This is a game that forces players to become very comfortable with the ball on their feet and all coaches want their players to be comfortable with the ball on their feet.”

FFC participates in many different winter activities, through its own programming at FCS, as well as other combined activities with other clubs throughout the region. . . and even potentially outside the region via national tournaments.

“FFC's winter programming has continued to improve and we are in a situation where we are offering more options this winter than before. These various programs have our travel players from U9-U19 training once a week indoors at FCS and playing games in a very competitive league against teams from RVA Futsal, Williamsburg, Richmond Kickers, FC Richmond and others,” Owolabi said.



In addition to Futsal league play, FFC will have teams competing in futsal specific tournaments such as the Jefferson Open, USFF State Cup, USYF Regionals, and a Presidents Day Weekend Cup.

Outside of futsal league and training programming, the club will have teams competing in indoor soccer at the Fredericksburg Field House, and will offer its own winter soccer Academies Programs and a winter camp. Also, new this year, FFC is offering a supplemental training program called “Elite Feet” that is an entry-level futsal program which will be led by the club’s full-time coaching staff.

“Winter training is extremely important for any player looking to stay in form and improve over the winter months,” Owolabi stressed. “As previously stated, with the weather conditions Virginia faces in the winter, it is not realistic to be outdoor daily so if you are able to get valuable touches on the ball and continue to compete in matches through futsal or our other

programs, you have put yourself in a great situation to jump into the spring season without missing a beat.”



If for some reason futsal or other winter programming is not an option for a player, it is still very important for players to be self-motivated and not just pack up their soccer gear until spring season programming starts.

Players should always try to get touches on the ball during these months and have many individual options available—juggling, dribbling, shooting around the yard or dribbling around the house to name a few.

“I always say that during ‘off-season’ times is when players need to be the most dedicated on individually working with the ball,” Owolabi asserted.