



# INTERNATIONALS *Soccer Club*



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Internationals Soccer Club: A History of Excellence

**SoccerAmerica**

## 2008 Best Girls Clubs

by Paul Kennedy, Friday, Feb 1, 2008 12:00 AM ET

For the second year in a row, Eclipse Select and the Dallas Texans are 1-2 in *Soccer America's* rankings of the Best Girls Clubs. Southern California's Slammers moved up two spots to No. 3.

### Soccer America's Top 25 Girls Clubs

1. Eclipse Select
2. Dallas Texans
3. Slammers FC
4. PDA
5. So Cal Blues
6. Irvine Strikers SC
7. McLean Premier Soccer
8. Sting Royal
9. Carmel United
10. Real Colorado
11. San Diego Surf
12. Edmond SC
13. World Class
14. Michigan Hawks
15. Colorado Rush
16. Arsenal FC
17. St. Louis SC
18. Bloomfield Force
19. Eagles SC
20. Pleasanton Rage
21. Real So Cal
22. Free State SA
23. Bethesda SC
24. Mustang Soccer
25. Internationals SC

### Criteria

*Soccer America* selects the top 25 clubs, based on success of their teams in national youth championships over the last three years and national recognition for players (including U.S. national youth team selections, NSCAA/adidas Youth All-Americans and U.S. Youth Soccer ODP Interregional All-Stars) from these clubs in 2007.

**1 ECLIPSE SELECT.** Thanks to spectacular 2005 and 2006 seasons in the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships, the Chicago area club was able to maintain the top spot. The Eclipse won the Moynihan Cup (U-17 division) in 2005 and sent two other teams to the Region II finals. In 2006, it repeated as Moynihan Cup champion, won the U-16 Masotto Cup and sent two other teams to the nationals. Rising Star: Defender Haley Cooper played on the U.S. under-14 girls national team at last fall's Women's Nike Friendlies in California.

**2 DALLAS TEXANS.** The Texans sent eight teams to the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships the last three years but produced only one champion: the '06 Red North team in the U-18 division. Two Texans teams were runners-up in 2007: the U-17s and U-16s both lost 3-2 decisions. The Texans' big star is Melissa Henderson, who won the 2006-07 Gatorade National Player of the Year award as a junior. She is headed to Notre Dame next fall. Rising Stars: '93 Region III ODP players Rosa Medina and Taylor Schneider.

**3 SLAMMERS FC.** The Newport Beach, Calif., club moves up two spots after sending two teams to the championship game at the 2007 U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships. The U-18 Slammers fell in a shootout to the Bloomfield Force, while the U-14s dropped an overtime decision to the Sting Royal. The year before, the Slammers won U.S. Club Soccer's U-16 Super Group. They have won seven national titles over the last six years. Rising Star: Defender Mia Bruno, a member of the U.S. under-15 girls national team.

**4 PDA.** The New Jersey club has dominated the Region I championships, winning six championships over the last three years. No other club can claim more than one title. Five of the PDA regional championship teams went to the final at the U.S. Youth Soccer nationals, but they all lost. PDA is best known for producing national team players Heather O'Reilly and Tobin Heath, who played on opposite wings at the recent Four Nations Tournament. Rising Stars: Daniella Colaprico and Daphnie Corboz of the Tsunami's '93 team.

**5 SO CAL BLUES.** What began as the San Juan Rip Curl in 1990 turned into the So Cal Blues, the Southern California girls giants. Long before girls soccer was popular, the Blues were turning out great players. Their 2007 U-15 title was the club's third national championship. They also won the 2000 U-16 championship and 2005 U-14 title. Rising Star: Gabriella Zarnegar won the adidas Golden Boot at the 2007 U-15 national championships.

**6 IRVINE STRIKERS SC.** One of the Southern California superclubs that excels in boys and girls soccer, the Strikers have won national championships in 2006 (U.S. Youth Soccer U-14 division) and 2007 (U.S. Club Soccer's U-15 Super Group). The Strikers had two players - goalie Makenna Henry and midfielder Natalia Ledezma - make the U.S. U-15 girls national team. Rising Star: Nicole De Puy played on the Region IV '92 team at last fall's ODP Interregionals.

**7 MCLEAN PREMIER SOCCER.** The Virginia club burst into Soccer America's girls rankings after a sensational 2007. The U-16 Freedom won the club's first U.S. Youth Soccer national championship when Caroline Miller scored twice in overtime to lead the Freedom to a 3-2 victory over the Dallas Texans Red. Freedom stars Jenna Richmond and Julia Roberts toured Argentina with the U.S. U-17s. Three McLean teams won Virginia state titles in the fall. Rising Stars: '92 Region I ODP players Torri Allen and Jennifer Skogerboe.

**8 STING ROYAL.** The Sting Royal returns to the Soccer America girls rankings after winning the U-14 national title in 2007. The Sting also has one U-16 and one U-18 championship and five U-19 championships to give it a total of eight U.S. Youth Soccer girls titles, the most of any club in the country. Among the North Texas club's head coaches is former indoor great Tatu, the coach of the '95 and '96 teams. Rising Star: Jessica Howard, winner of the adidas Golden Boot at the 2007 U-14 national championships.

**9 CARMEL UNITED.** With players from Indiana, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas and Navy, the U-19 Cyclones were loaded and won a girls title at the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships - the first national title for an Indiana club. Carmel's most notable alumna is Lauren Cheney, the 2007 Soccer America Women's College Player of the Year and U.S. Soccer's Young Female Athlete of the Year. Rising Star: Haley Keller scored Carmel's only goal in the U-14 division at the National Championships.

**10 REAL COLORADO.** Real Colorado was the only team to win all four games at the 2006 U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships, capturing the U-16 Masotto Cup. With the opening of Dick's Sporting Goods Park, Real Colorado is playing its showcase tournaments at the home of MLS's Colorado Rapids. Rising Star: Midfielder Beth West traveled to Argentina with the U.S. under-17 national team at the end of last year.

**11 SAN DIEGO SURF.** The California team has dropped off slightly. After six straight seasons with at least one team in the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships, the Surf has been shut out the last two years. The Surf's three national titles came in 2000, 2002 and 2003. The club organizes the Surf Cup and Surf Girls Cup, two major girls tournaments. Rising Star: Kate Perry was named to the Region IV '93 team that competed in the 2007 U.S. Youth Soccer Thanksgiving ODP Interregional.

**12 EDMOND SC.** For the third straight year, the Oklahoma club makes the Soccer America girls rankings. It was No. 19 in 2006 and No. 9 in 2007. The club's breakthrough came in 2004 when Edmond reached the U-14 finals at the National Championships. Two more appearances in the finals followed in 2005 and 2006. The '90 and '91 teams have, 20 players, led by Oklahoma-bound Dria a total of Hampton, headed to Division I programs next year. Rising Star: Forward Caitlan Mooney, who along with Hampton, is in the U-18 national team player pool.

**13 WORLD CLASS.** The club is giving PDA a run for its money as the top girls club in New Jersey. Its U-16 World Class Arsenal team is coached by the U.S. U-18 girls national team coach Kazbek Tambi and advanced to the U-17 finals at the 2007 U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships. World Class midfielder Taylor Wilson was on the U.S. U-17 girls national team last year. Rising Star: Defender Amber Brooks from Pennsylvania played on the U.S. U-16 girls national team in 2007.

**14 MICHIGAN HAWKS.** The Hawks have sent four teams to the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships the last three years, but none has reached the final. The Hawks' three national championships came in 1989, 2001 and 2004. The club's boys program - the Wolves - has also won three national titles. Despite increasing competition from other Michigan clubs, the Hawks

remain dominant. They won five of six state championships last year. Rising Star: Region II '93 ODP player Lisa Vogel.

**15 COLORADO RUSH.** Headquartered in Lakewood, Colo., the Rush was formed in 1997 through the merger of Club Columbine and the Lakewood United Soccer Club. It quickly became a giant in girls soccer, winning six national titles over four years (1998-2001). It added a seventh title (in the U-19 division) in 2006. Rising Star: Mackenzie Akerfelds, a member of the 2007 U.S. U-15 national team player pool.

**16 ARSENAL FC.** The Southern California club, a longtime powerhouse on the boys side, is making a name for itself on the girls side. Shawna Gordon is one of the top midfielders on the U.S. U-17 girls national team, and its '93 class is one of the deepest in the country. Rising Stars: Jennifer Gonzalez and Lo'o LaBonta were called into the U.S. under-14 girls national team last fall.

**17 ST. LOUIS SC.** For many years known as a boys power, St. Louis SC (the former Busch club) won its first girls national championship in 2005 when it captured the U-15 Lilly Cup at the U.S. Youth Soccer National Championships. It won 10 girls state titles the last two years. Rising Star: Kelley Gravlin played on the Region II's '92 team at the 2007 ODP Interregionals.

**18 BLOOMFIELD FORCE.** The Michigan club won its first national championship in 2007 when it captured the Kelly Cup with a shootout victory over the Slammers in the U-18 final at U.S. Youth Soccer's National Championships. The Force is joining forces with the Novi Jaguars to form Team Michigan. Rising Star: Alyssa Wombwell is coming off a stellar '07 high school season.

**19 EAGLES SC.** The Ventura County (Calif.) program returns for the second straight year in the girls rankings. The Eagles won the 2004 U-14 U.S. Youth Soccer national championship and captured their second title in the same group last year when they won the U-17 national title with a 3-2 victory over the powerful Dallas Texans Red. Rising Star: Region IV '92 ODP player Hayley Boysen.

**20 PLEASANTON RAGE.** The Northern California powerhouse, winner of national titles in 2002 and 2004, was second at the Region IV U-16 finals in 2006 and won the U-17 regional title in 2007. They have two players on the U-17 national team: Megan Jurado and Olivia Klein. Rising Star: Jessica Michelson was named to Region I's '93 team for the 2007 ODP Interregionals.

**21 REAL SO CAL.** The Southern California club is once again ranked in the boys - at No. 4 - and the girls. Real So Cal won the U-15 North American championship in 2006 when it was No. 1 in the Super Y-League's Best XI Girls rankings. Rising Star: Marie Mackenzie played on the U.S. under-14 national team at the 2007 Women's Nike Friendlies.

**22 FREESTATE SA.** The Freestate Shooters, the top team in Maryland's Freestate Soccer Association, won their first national title in 2007 when they captured the U-17 Super Group at U.S. Club Soccer's National Cup VI. Two Shooters played Division I college ball in 2007 and 12

others have committed to Division I programs in 2008 and 2009. Rising Stars: Lyndse Hakonson and Janice Johnson of the Phoenix played for Region I in the '92 Interregionals group.

**23 BETHESDA SC.** The Maryland club has had strong boys and girls programs for many years. This marks the fourth time in five years Bethesda is ranked in both the boys and girls rankings. It won its first girls U.S. Youth Soccer title in 2001 and produces regional and national contenders each year. Rising Star: Alexandra Doll, who played for Region I's '93 team at the ODP Interregionals over Thanksgiving.

**24 MUSTANG SOCCER.** Mustang is one of the strongest clubs in Northern California. The Blast won the 2006 Region IV U-17 championship and lost to the Slammers in the 2007 final. It hosted the Red Bull National League's inaugural games for the U-15 and U-16 girls at its 2007 Stampede tournament. Rising Star: Megan Kufeld played on the U.S. under-14 national team at the 2007 Women's Nike Friendlies.

**25 INTERNATIONALS SC.** The Cleveland area program became the first club to win three girls titles at the Super Y-Leagues North American finals when it captured the U-13, U-15 and U-16 championships. The Internationals finished the year No. 1 in the SYL's Best XI girls rankings. Rising Star: Desiree Aber, the U-16 girls Super Y-League MVP.

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