



Henry County, GA, 1/18/24 — Atlanta Fire United South is excited to announce that Atlanta Fire United South will be joining the United Premier Soccer League to offer a player pathway to Pro. The AFU South UPSL will be under the leadership of General Manager, Chris Mahaffey and Associate Head Coach, Marcelle Francois.

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Our program at Atlanta Fire United South have always taken great pride in providing the best possible development opportunities for our players. We are committed to player development and finding a challenging league for our players to compete in. This gives the perfect opportunity for our players to play at a high level and transition into the largest pro development league in the country —

Marcelle Francois, AFU South Associate Head Coach

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Our UPSL staff brings a great deal of experience, college and professional contacts with coaches domestically and abroad. Mahaffey has coached at all levels from youth to College, as well as, professional indoor with the NISL. As the General Manager of the UPSL team within AFU South, Mahaffey, while working closely with Francois, will be tasked with bringing a professional environment for the players, additionally allowing the youth of Henry County to aspire to play for their 1st team (UPSL). Francois brings an extensive playing background and contacts with professional clubs abroad. We are thrilled to have Mahaffey and Francois at the helm as both bring the ability to teach a desire to win. Both Mahaffey and Francois are proven leaders and winners at every level.

Atlanta Fire South UPSL will consist of former professional players, current and former college players, in addition to youth players that are apart of Elite Academy League, ECNL and MLS Next. We will compete in the first division of the UPSL Georgia Conference.

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We are excited to bring a professional experience to Henry County. Adding a professional pathway to the programs we offer at AFU South completes our player platform. We are thrilled to expand our programming into the Professional realm. This will allow the youth academy players at AFU South the opportunity to strive to play for the 1st team (UPSL) at their club.

This is an exciting time for AFU South and Henry County as a whole —

Chris Mahaffey, AFU South UPSL General Manager

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About the UPSL

Founded in 2011, the United Premier Soccer League now stands as the largest and most competitive pro-development league in North America. The league was started in Santa Ana, California by Leonel Lopez, with 10 teams. Today the league has nearly 400 clubs competing nationwide, and the Premier Division for Spring 2022 has 255 clubs competing for 32 places in the National Playoff Bracket to become National Champion.

The league occupies the 4th tier of the US Soccer pyramid, just below the three professional tiers in the pyramid. With a participant average age of 22.5 years, the UPSL fills and brings structure to the large gap that exists between the youth game and the professional game, serving thousands of aspiring players and coaches as they strive to further their aspirations and fuel their passions.

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