



**United in serving the community
both on and off the field**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA AND INDEPENDENCE SOCCER CLUB ENTER STRATEGIC SOCCER AGREEMENT

Newly Formed partnership demonstrates Gaston County Family YMCA's commitment to being an industry leader all the time within all aspects and areas of youth development in our community.

Gaston County, NC. — Gaston County Family YMCA and the Charlotte Independence enter into a partnership today making Independence Soccer Club the official partner to Gaston County Family YMCA for all soccer programming services.

The exclusive agreement demonstrates Gaston County Family YMCA's commitment to help grow the profile of soccer in Gaston County and surrounding areas from the youth level to high school, college, and on up to the professional ranks, while serving the community on and off the field.

As an industry leader focused on symbiotic growth with all partners, the partnership is expected to unify youth soccer in the area and will provide the best possible soccer environment for players, coaches, parents, referees and staff.

Sharon Padgett, CEO of Gaston County Family YMCA said: "Very excited about the joint partnership venture with Independence Soccer. Our values and passion for youth sports lines up nicely with each other. Instead of working harder, we are working smarter together. Our volunteer coaches and players will be trained with the intentionality of expertise in soccer and in coaching. Good things are ahead for both the Gaston County Family YMCA and Independence soccer."

"Our partnership with the Gaston County Family YMCA simply reflects the renewed and extended commitment from the club to the soccer community in the West." Said Thomas Finlay, Chief Executive Officer at Independence Soccer Club.

"This partnership allows us to oversee and work with the YMCA for over 350 recreational players providing player development training, coaching staff oversight with youth league & camp oversight. With focus on the development of referees and parent education, we are simply all in" said West Director Andrew Ward. "We're excited and can't wait to extend the benefits for all recreational players in the community"

As part of the long-term commitment, the Gaston County Family YMCA and the Independence Soccer Club's will further develop, promote, and administer the game of soccer in Gaston County of Character, Commitment, Community, Competition, and Communication as the guiding principles to achieve success and provide an exceptional experience, while also developing and promoting life lessons and values.

As part of the renewed relationship, the Gaston County Family YMCA will develop a reputable recreation program that reflects the values of the YMCA and the soccer organization while providing training to recreation coaches and free clinics to recreation players.

For more information regarding the agreement with Independence Soccer Club, visit GastonYMCA.org. Additional information will be forth coming directly to Gaston County Family YMCA members.

ABOUT GASTON COUNTY FAMILY YMCA: The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 22 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. ymca.net

ABOUT CHARLOTTE INDEPENDENCE SOCCER CLUB: In April 2019, the Charlotte Independence announced a historic formation of the Charlotte Independence Soccer Club (Independence Soccer Club). Independence Soccer Club is one of the top-10 largest, youth-to-professional clubs in the United States with a player network of close to 12,000 members, formed from existing youth soccer clubs of Carolina Rapids Soccer Club, Discoveries Soccer Club, and Lake Norman Soccer Club. Together, Independence Soccer Club is positioned to build a better club in serving the surrounding Charlotte-area soccer communities.

Independence Soccer Club is a comprehensive soccer club with playing levels for boys and girls ranging from recreation levels, ECNL, NPL, USL (United Soccer League) Academy, USL League Two, to the USL Championship. The creation of Independence Soccer from Carolina Rapids Soccer Club, Discoveries Soccer Club, and Lake Norman Soccer Club allows for pooled resources from all clubs, which effectively elevates player experiences and club programming, increases in coaches’ development opportunities, and strengthened partnerships with local municipalities and sponsors. The affiliation with the Charlotte Independence professional soccer team provides players a clear pathway to the highest level of professional soccer. The Charlotte Independence currently plays in the United Soccer League Championship at the Sportsplex at Matthews and is focused on building the profile of the club through culture, community and performance as the team moves to a revitalized 10,000-seat American Legion Memorial Stadium in the spring of 2021.

The creation of Independence Soccer Club has allowed for pooled resources from all legacy clubs, which has effectively elevated player experiences, expanded club programming, increased coaching development opportunities, and strengthened partnerships with local municipalities and sponsors. It has also enhanced marketing efforts, increased sponsorship opportunities, and facilitated future infrastructure development in every single community associated with the club.



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