



# VENTURA COUNTY FUSION



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## CLUB INFORMATION

- The Ventura County Fusion is an American soccer club based in Ventura, California that was founded in 2006. In 2007, the Fusion became the first soccer franchise from the Ventura County area of Southern California to enter the Premier Development League (PDL).
- The Fusion senior team plays in the Southwest Division of the Western Conference of the United Soccer Leagues' (USL) PDL. The PDL is primarily designed to develop players between the ages of 17 and 23 for careers in professional soccer, and is made up of 64 teams from across North America.
- The Fusion is one of the only franchises around the country to truly incorporate all levels of the game. The Fusion fields a men's USL PDL team, a youth club academy, and various community soccer programs for players at all levels and needs, including soccer schools, soccer camps, youth soccer league, and free soccer clinics for over 25,000 kids.
- The Fusion Youth Club Academy hosts three annual youth soccer tournaments: the Fusion

Spring Classic in March, the Fusion Clasico in June and the Fusion Invitational in August. The tournaments are sold out with approximately 125 teams competing in each event. In 2014 & 2015, Fusion teamed up with Bimbo Bakeries to host the Bimbo B-Active Cup, a nationally-recognized youth tournament.

- The Fusion Youth Soccer Academy regularly fields about 20 competitive teams with approximately 400 players between the ages of 8 and 19. The Academy has a director of coaching and fully qualified professional coaches overseeing the entire program.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS**

- In 2009, the Fusion defeated the Chicago Fire PDL team (2-1) to win the USL PDL National Championship.
- The Fusion has been dominant in the Southwest Division in recent years, claiming the regular season division title in three of the past five seasons. The Fusion won 7 of its final 8 games in 2014 to win the league title by a single point, adding the 2014 division title to wins in 2010 & 2012.
- In each of the last four years of the US Open Cup, the Fusion has won at least one match, a record for a USL PDL club. Fusion reached the 3rd Round in 2012, losing ultimately to Chivas 1-0 at Ventura College.
- The Fusion captured a historic win in July 2014, defeating Rangers F.C. (Glasgow, Scotland) 3-1 in a friendly match at Ventura College.
- The 2009 National Championship game was played in Ventura, California, to a sell-out crowd and broadcasted nationwide on Fox Soccer Channel. The Fusion was the first-ever Ventura County sports franchise to be nationally telecast.
- En route to the 2009 title, the Fusion won the 2009 USL PDL Western Conference Championship. This included victories over the Los Angeles Legends and Hollywood United Hitmen.
- The Fusion reached the 2009 USL PDL Final with victories over the Kitsap Pumas and the Bradenton Academics in Laredo, Texas.
- In 2010, the Fusion made franchise history by finishing the regular season with the best record and winning the USL PDL Southwest Division title.
- The following year, 2011, the Fusion completed the regular season undefeated, finishing the year with a 10-0-6 record.

- In 2012, the Fusion once again had a stellar regular season, winning the USL PDL Southwest Division title for a second time.
- In 2013, Fusion hosted two full national teams, Canada & New Zealand, and drew both sides 1-1.
- The same year, the Fusion again reached the USL PDL playoffs, and in doing so, qualified for the for the US Open Cup for a fifth consecutive year.
- Throughout the course of the season, the average Fusion home game attendance is approximately 1,200 fans. With the recent growth that the franchise has seen, it is expected to see this number rise for next season.
- In 2015, Fusion defeated Los Angeles Galaxy II in the 2nd round of the US Open Cup.
- In 2015, Fusion claimed the inaugural Ventura County Cup with a 2-1 win over FC Hasental.
- In 2015, Fusion drew the U-17 Mexico Men's National Team, 2-2, before a sold out crowd at Ventura College.
- The Ventura County Fusion franchise was awarded the 2008 USL PDL Communications Award.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

- Local, national, and international media have frequently featured articles about the franchise's accomplishments throughout the years, with the franchise providing weekly press releases and media updates about the PDL team during the season.
- ESPN, Fox Sports, and the UK's Daily Mail are just a few of the relevant media outlets that have covered Fusion during the franchise's eight years of existence.
- Each season, domestic and international opponents square off against the Fusion in frequently televised games. This coverage includes the PDL Championship and the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup.
- All Fusion home games are broadcast on local cable TV, and streamed online via [YouTube.com/VCFusion](https://www.youtube.com/VCFusion).
- Fusion boast some of the top social media coverage in the entire league, producing daily activity on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Make sure to follow the franchise on all social media with the username VCFusion.

## **THE FUSION VERSUS THE WORLD**

- The Fusion regularly plays preseason and in-season exhibition matches against some of the top professional teams from around the planet, including world-famous opponents such as Manchester City, Everton FC, West Bromwich Albion, Portsmouth FC, Swansea City & Burnley FC of the English Premier League; Rangers F.C. (Glasgow, Scotland); Independiente of Argentina's First Division; AIK, Hammarby and GAIS of the Swedish First Division; Oita Trinita, recent J-League champion; and Club America and Club Tijuana of the Mexican First Division.
- The Fusion earned its first victory against a European opponent, when the team defeated one of Great Britain's most historic clubs, Glasgow Rangers, 3-1 at the Ventura College Sportsplex. Jordan Vale gave Fusion a first half lead before Rony Arguetta and Matt LaGrassa helped seal the historic win before a near-capacity crowd.
- The Fusion has played a number of Major League Soccer (MLS) teams, including Chicago Fire, Chivas USA, Colorado Rapids, Columbus Crew, D.C. United, Los Angeles Galaxy, Montreal Impact, Portland Timbers, Real Salt Lake, San Jose Earthquakes, Seattle Sounders & Vancouver Whitecaps.
- In 2013, the Fusion hosted and played exhibition matches against the full men's national teams of both Canada & New Zealand. Fusion drew Canada 1-1 in a closed-door friendly just before the Canadians opened their CONCACAF Gold Cup campaign. Just three months later, the Fusion tied New Zealand 1-1 as the Kiwis prepared to meet Mexico in the FIFA World Cup playoff in Mexico City.
- The Fusion has also played friendly matches against the United States U18 & U20 national teams, Mexico U18, U21 & U17 national teams and New Zealand U20 national team.

The Fusion's most notable performances against world-class club competition include:

- February 2017: 1-0 victory over Alashkert FC (Armenian Premier League Champions)
- July 2014: 3-1 win over Rangers F.C. (Glasgow, Scotland)
- October 2013: 1-1 draw with the New Zealand Men's National Team.
- July 2013: 1-1 draw with the Canada Men's National Team.
- February 2013: 1-0 victory over AIK Fotboll.

- January 2012: 1-0 victory over Chivas USA.
- July 2011: Gyasi Zardes scored twice in a 2-1 victory over the New Zealand U20 National Team
- March 2010: 1-1 draw with the Mexico U21 National Team.
- February 2009: 1-0 victory over GAIS
- Historic club Glasgow Rangers opened their 2014 North American Tour in Ventura, training for a few days before playing Fusion in their first match in the United States since 2007. Conditions and facilities were ideal for Scotland-based Rangers, as they prepared to push for a place in the Scottish Premier League during the 2014-15 season.
- October 2013, the Fusion hosted the New Zealand Men's National team for five days in Ventura County for their preparation for their FIFA World Cup Intercontinental playoff match against Mexico. The Fusion drew 1-1 against New Zealand, one of only three exhibition matches prior to the World Cup qualifier.
- In July 2013, the Fusion hosted the Canadian Men's National team for ten days in Oxnard for their preparation for the 2013 CONCACF Gold Cup. The Fusion drew 1-1 in Canada's only exhibition match prior to the CONCACAF Gold Cup.
- From January through March 2013, the Fusion hosted 4 MLS soccer clubs and AIK Fotboll of the Allsvenskan in Ventura for their preseason training and exhibition games. These clubs included Colorado Rapids, Chicago Fire, San Jose Earthquakes & Los Angeles Galaxy.
- In July 2012, the Fusion hosted Swansea City of the English Premier League in Oxnard for its preseason training for six days and an exhibition game at Oxnard College.
- In July 2011, the Fusion hosted West Bromwich Albion of the English Premier League in Ventura for its preseason training for ten days and an exhibition game at Oxnard College.
- From November 2010 through March 2011, the Fusion hosted 5 MLS soccer clubs in Ventura for their preseason training and exhibition games. These clubs included Colorado Rapids, D.C. United, Portland Timbers, San Jose Earthquakes & Vancouver Whitecaps.
- In July 2010, the Fusion hosted Portsmouth FC of the English Premier League in Ventura for its preseason training for seven days and an exhibition game at Oxnard College.
- In July 2009, the Fusion hosted Burnley FC of the English Premier League in Ventura for its preseason training for two weeks. The Fusion also hosted a game with Burnley FC at Buena High School in Ventura, in front of 3,800 fans.

## **FUSION TECHNICAL STAFF**

- Graham Smith, director of soccer, is a former director of Chelsea of the English Premier League, and a veteran of over 250 professional games. He is the founder of First Wave Sports Marketing, the third largest soccer agency in the United States.
- Head Coach Rudy Ybarra is a former NASL professional. He played for the LA Aztecs, Tulsa Roughnecks, and Memphis Rogues of the NASL. A professional career that spans 10 years, 2013 marks his first year in charge of the Fusion.
- Technical Director Ole Mikkelsen, a former NASL professional soccer player and U.S. Olympic team member, who holds the record at UCLA for most goals scored in a career with 83.
- Bob McNab, director of player development, is a former English Premier League player with Arsenal, an England National team member and coach in the NASL, MISL, and CISL. Bob brings over 40 years of diverse soccer experience on the world stage to the Fusion franchise.

## **FUSION PLAYERS IN PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES WORLDWIDE**

- January 2017 MLS Superdraft provided Fusion Striker Abu Danladi being drafted No. 1 overall in the Major League Soccer SuperDraft by Minnesota United FC. Furthermore Nick DePuy selected No. 19 overall by Montreal Impact. Also Joe Holland picked No. 10 by Houston Dynamo.
- The Fusion's talent pool for the PDL team continues to be one of the highest in the country. The Fusion had the pleasure of placing former player Anton Peterlin with Everton FC of the English Premier League. This was the first time ever that a player from a PDL franchise was offered a contract from an EPL team.
- In January 2014, five Fusion players were selected in the MLS SuperDraft, with J.J. Koval (9th Overall), Joe Sofia (28th overall) & Victor Munoz (29th overall) leading the way. Defender Peter Schmetz was drafted by MLS champion Sporting Kansas City with the third pick of the third round (41th overall) & UCLA attacker Victor Chavez was drafted by the Portland Timbers in the 14th pick of the fourth round (71st overall). Also, Fusion captain Manny Guzman signed with Mexican 2nd division side Mérida C.F.
- In 2013, Fusion midfielder Rodrigo Lopez signed for USL Pro expansion side Sacramento Republic becoming the first player in franchise history. Over the next 12 months, Sacramento

Republic FC would go on to sign seven more former Fusion players; Ivan Mirkovic, Mickey Daly, Hakop Avesyan, Harrison Delbridge, James Kiffe, Agustin Cazarez and Jack Lane.

- In 2013, Fusion forward Gyasi Zardes signs for Los Angeles Galaxy as a Homegrown player.
- In 2012, the Fusion had six players drafted to Major League Soccer teams.
- In 2011, the Fusion had a player sign with a Serbian First Division club, four players sign with MLS clubs and eight players sign with USL Pro clubs.
- In 2010, the Fusion had four players sign with MLS clubs.
- In 2009, the Fusion saw four players sign with MLS clubs. The Fusion has also had various players on trials with many international clubs throughout the world, including teams in England, Mexico, Norway, Germany, and Sweden.
- Selected by the Kansas City Wizards, former Fusion player Chance Myers was the top pick overall in the 2008 MLS Super Draft.
- The franchise had six players selected in the 2008 MLS Super Draft.
- Since 2007, the Fusion has had over 100 players move onto play professional soccer in the U.S.

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