The Acorn

Quakes soccer team feels right at home in Calabasas

Premier Development League squad plays at CHS

By Thomas Gase tgase@theacorn.com

If local fans want to catch a Major League Soccer game in person, all they have to do is take the 405 Freeway to Home Depot Center to see the Los Angeles Galaxy play.

If those fans want to get a possible glimpse at the team's future, the drive is much shorter.

For the first time, the San Fernando Valley Quakes of the Premier Development League (PDL) are playing their home games at Keith Ritchie Field at Calabasas High.

The Quakes, an amateur soccer team in its third year of existence, consists of current college players from Division I schools such as UCLA and Cal State Northridge, as well as seasoned veterans of the game.

Quakes goalie Kevin Guppy, who also attends Cal State Northridge, said he's enjoyed his time playing with the ballclub.

"It's been a good experience," Guppy said. "It's a chance to see the level of competition that may await you if you go the next step. This league offers a very good exposure for the players, especially the college guys."

Although San Fernando has only been in the league for three years, its squad has already made an impact in the standings.

Last season, the Quakes made the PDL playoffs for the first time after winning 10 straight games and going undefeated at John Elway Stadium at Granada Hills' Charter High.

General manager Justin Szabo said having the home games in Calabasas this year made more sense.

"We made a partnership with Real SoCal Soccer Club and the West Valley Soccer League two years ago, and many players from those leagues live in Calabasas," Szabo said.

"It's also a great location, with the temperature being a little cooler than most venues in the valley."

Thus far, the Quakes are tied for fourth place in the Southwest Division with the Ventura County Fusion and are just three points behind the Los Angeles Legends for second place.

The division's top two teams qualify for the playoffs.

The Quakes are undefeated in their last four games, having defeated the San Francisco Seals and San Jose Frogs on the road and tying the Bakersfield Brigade and Orange County Blue Star at home.

Playing especially well lately for the Quakes has been Matt Tracy, who was named to the PDL Team of the Week for Week 10 of the season after scoring two goals.

Tracy, also a senior at Cal State Northridge, still believes his squad can make the postseason.

"On paper we have the best team," Tracy said. "We just need to do a better job of scoring off our many opportunities we seem to get.

"We also need to be more consistent, and play two full halves of great soccer, rather than one. We do that, we should be okay."

The Quakes' next game is Friday on the road against Lancaster.

San Fernando then finishes with three of its final four games at home, beginning July 10 with a contest against the Legends.

Ticket prices are $8 for adults and $6 for kids 16 and under.
Quakes' schedule
Fri., July 4 at Lancaster
Rattlers, 7 p.m.
Thurs., July 10 vs. Los
Angeles Legends, 7:05 p.m.
Sat., July 12 at Fresno
Fuego, 7 p.m.
Thurs., July 17 vs. Ventura
County Fusion, 7:05 p.m.
Sun., July 20 vs. Fresno
Fuego, 7:05 p.m.