

Snow Names 21-Player Roster for 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan



USA to Face Paraguay, Ghana and Japan in Group D

U-17 WNT Aug 26, 2016

CHICAGO (Aug. 26, 2012) – U.S. Under-17 Women's National Team head coach B.J. Snow has named the 21 players who will represent the United States at the 2016 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup being held in Jordan from Sept. 30-Oct. 21.

The U.S. plays its first Group D match against Paraguay on Oct. 1 at Prince Mohammed International Stadium in Al Zarqa (7 p.m. local / Noon a.m. ET) before facing Ghana on Oct. 4 at King Abdullah II International Stadium in Amman (4 p.m. local / 9 a.m. ET). The USA will finish group play on Oct. 8 against Japan at Amman International Stadium (7 p.m. local / Noon ET).

"This is an immensely exciting time for our players and staff," Snow said. "After a thorough evaluation process over the course of the last two years, we feel that we have selected a group of players capable of embracing the challenges that a World Cup presents. The selection process has been excruciatingly intense and this is a direct result of the depth of the player pool for this age group. We evaluated over 120 players within our training camps this cycle and they all deserve a ton of credit."

Snow, who has taken the squad through eight training camps/events and 12 international matches so far this year, will bring the 2016 U-17 Women's World Cup Team to a final camp in Florida from Aug. 26-Sept. 3 before departure for Jordan later in the month. During the camp, the USA will play the Venezuela U-17 WNT twice, on Aug. 30 at the Water Soccer Complex in Tampa, Fla. (7 p.m. ET kickoff) and on Sept. 2 at the Premier Sports Campus in Lakewood Ranch, Fla. (7 p.m. ET kickoff). Admission is free to both matches.

“We have five weeks left to prepare for our first game in Jordan and we need to take advantage of every day,” Snow said. “The two games against Venezuela will provide a very important snapshot of where we are and what we need to continue to focus on. Venezuela is an outstanding opponent that has a history of success at the U-17 level, highlighted by their fourth-place finish in the last U-17 World Cup. Having the opportunity to play them will be a tremendous challenge and we look forward to testing ourselves.”

United States 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Team Roster by Position:

GOALKEEPERS (3): Hillary Beall (So Cal Blues; Laguna Beach, Calif.), Laurel Ivory (West Florida Flames; Surfside, Fla.), Meagan McClelland (PDA; Kearny, N.J.)

DEFENDERS (7): Naomi Girma (Central Valley Crossfire; San Jose, Calif.), Kiara Pickett (Eagles; Santa Barbara, Calif.), Isabel Rodriguez (Michigan Hawks; Canton, Mich.), Karina Rodriguez (So Cal Blues; Torrance, Calif.) Emily Smith (De Anza Force; Los Gatos, Calif.), Kennedy Wesley (So Cal Blues; Rossmoor, Calif.), Kate Wiesner (Slammers FC; Monrovia, Calif.)

MIDFIELDERS (7): Jordan Canniff (Richmond United; California, Md.), Lia Godfrey (Jacksonville Armada; Fleming Island, Fla.), Jaelin Howell (Real Colorado; Windsor, Colo.), Brianna Pinto (CASL; Durham, N.C.), Alexa Spaanstra (Michigan Hawks; Brighton, Mich.), Frankie Tagliaferri (PDA; Colts Neck, N.J.), Sydney Zandi (Penn Fusion; West Chester, Penn.)

FORWARDS (4): Civana Kuhlmann (Colorado Rush; Littleton, Colo.), Adrienne Richardson (Minnesota Thunder Academy; Oakdale, Minn.), Ashley Sanchez (So Cal Blues; Monrovia, Calif.), Sophia Smith (Real Colorado; Windsor, Colo.)

The players on the World Cup roster span three birth years. Of the 21 named, 12 were born in 1999 which is the age cut-off year for the 2016 U-17 Women's World Cup and the year that USA won its historic Women's World Cup title on home soil. Snow also named five players born 2000 and four born in 2001. Three of the 2001s – defenders Kennedy Wesley and Kate Wiesner and midfielder Jordan Caniff -- were as part of the U.S. team that won the CONCACAF championship last March while qualifying for the World Cup. The other, midfielder Lia Godfrey, who won't turn 15 until November, made a late run to make the squad.

“We feel we have put together a roster that is balanced on the field, but more importantly, is in alignment with our foundational principles,” Snow added. “Our goal at this age group is to try and invest players that we feel have the ability to help us win now while at the same time show qualities that will help enable each player to matriculate up through our National Team system. This balance is absolutely critical in our overall developmental strategy as an organization and serves as our true North when we deliberate the qualities of each player.”

The USA has a talented and diverse group of attacking players led by Ashley Sanchez, who was awarded the Golden Ball as the best player at the CONCACAF qualifying tournament. Sanchez, who also plays for the U.S. U-20 WNT, has scored 18 goals in 16 U-17 internationals. Civana Kuhlmann has scored 10 goals in 15 U-17 caps. Adrienne Richardson made a late run to make the final roster while Sophia Smith has shown versatility in several attacking positions and set up the game-winning goal from the right flank in the title game of the CONCACAF U-17 Women's Championship earlier in the year.

The USA also has depth in the midfield, which is anchored by central players Brianna Pinto and Jaelin Howell, two tremendous ball-winners who also have shown sophistication in setting the rhythm of the U.S. attack. The roster includes a slew of talented flank players, a group that includes youngsters Canniff and Godfrey. Frankie Tagliaferri, who along with Kuhlmann is in her second U-17 cycle, has eight goals in 22 caps. Alexa Spaanstra and Sydney Zandi have also shown to be versatile and dangerous attacking players.

The U.S. defense is led by center backs Naomi Girma and Karina Rodriguez who have 25 U-17 caps between them. The USA has several outside backs who are both gritty defenders and good into the attack on the wings, including Kiara Pickett as well as Wesley and Wiesner, who both played significant minutes during the qualifying tournament. Isabel Rodriguez (no relation to Karina) and Emily Smith, who scored her first international goal in the USA's 1-1 draw with Brazil a few weeks ago, add depth to the back line.

In goal, the USA has height and quality with the 5-foot-9 Laurel Ivory, who won the Golden Glove as the best 'keeper at qualifying, along with the 5-foot-11 Hilary Beall and 5-10 Meagan McClelland, who made a late run to grab the third goalkeeper spot on the roster.

The 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will feature 16 teams, with the top two finishers in each group advancing to the quarterfinals. Should the U.S. advance to the second round by winning the group, it would meet a second-place team from Group C. If the USA finishes second in the group, it would face the first-place team from Group C.

Group A features Jordan, Spain, Mexico and New Zealand. Group B features Venezuela, Germany, Cameroon and Canada. Group C features Nigeria, Brazil, England and Korea DPR.

"The ability to play in a youth World Cup is an important part of development for each of our players," Snow said. "They will be tested physically and emotionally like they have never been before. It is crucial that the players understand the intensity of these feelings and learn to not only deal with them but more importantly embrace them. We do not shy away from talking about these factors and we believe it is one of the most critical parts of our preparation."

Additional Notes:

- The U.S. U-17s have compiled a record of 10-0-2 in 2016 as 25 players have taken part in international matches.
- Eleven different players have scored in an international match for the USA in 2016. Forward Civana Kuhlmann leads the USA in goals this year with eight, while Ashley Sanchez has seven and Frankie Tagliaferri has six.
- The core of this U.S. team has risen through the ranks together in the U.S. youth national teams, with 10 of the 12 1999s on the roster attending U.S. Under-14 training camps in 2013.
- Lia Godfrey is the youngest player with a November of 2001 birthday while Tagliaferri is the oldest, having been born on Jan. 18, 1999.
- Fifteen different youth clubs from nine states are represented on the roster with the So Cal Blues out of Southern California having four players on the roster. Real Colorado, the Michigan Hawks and PDA out of New Jersey have two players each.

- The roster includes eight players from California (six from Southern, two from Northern), three players from Colorado and two each from Michigan, Florida and New Jersey.
- Every player on the roster has been capped at least once at the U-17 level, with six players having 15 or more caps. Tagliaferri has the most experience with 22 caps, followed by Alexa Spaanstra with 17, Sanchez and Jaelin Howell with 16 each and Brianna Pinto and Kuhlmann with 15 each. Sophia Smith has 14.
- At the U-17 level, each confederation (outside of the smallest Oceania) gets three berths to the World Cup tournament. Eleven countries return from the 2014 tournament, which includes defender champion Japan.
- Jordan, which encompasses roughly the same square miles as the state of Indiana, will host the tournament in four venues, two in Amman, one in Irbid, which is about 60 miles north of Amman, and one in Al Zarqa, which is just 15 miles northeast of Amman.
- The 12,000-seat Prince Mohammed International Stadium in Al Zarqa, where the USA opens the tournament, features an artificial surface while the other three stadiums have natural grass. Amman International Stadium, which seats 13,000, will host the Third-Place Match on Oct. 20 and World Cup Final on Oct. 21. King Abdullah II International Stadium seats 12,000, as does the Al Hassan International Stadium in Irbid, the only venue the USA will not play in during group play.

