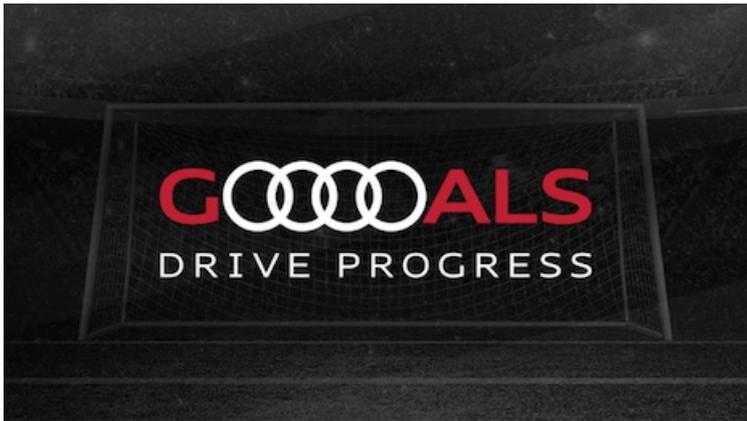


AUTOMOTIVE

Audi teams with MLS to support soccer's next generation

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Audi's Goals Drive Progress campaign. Image courtesy of MLS

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is working with Major League Soccer to advance the sport in the United States.

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The initiative, dubbed Audi Goals Drive Progress, is centered on elevating the experience at MLS Academies, which run programs and training geared toward aspiring professional players. Audi is in its fifth year as the official automaker of MLS, a role that has seen the marque work to raise soccer's profile in the U.S.

"Soccer is on the rise in the U.S., and in support, Audi is committing to increasing awareness and helping develop world-class training facilities for the next generation of soccer stars," said Loren Angelo, vice president of marketing at Audi of America, in a statement. "Our mission is to help enable the professional pursuit of young athletes and, in turn help create the highest caliber of play to delight fans.

"Our multi-year Audi Goals Drive Progress program with MLS will offer an holistic approach to MLS Academy programs by supporting the growth of soccer as well as driving individual progress both on and off the field for athletes of the future," he said.

Soccer support

Audi will be donating a set amount for every goal scored in the 2019 season, up to \$1 million.

During the MLS All-Star game on July 31, each goal earned the program \$5,000.

Regular season games will garner \$500 per goal, while goals during the Audi MLS Cup Playoffs will earn the initiative \$2,000. Every time someone scores at the MLS Cup, Audi will donate \$10,000.

Audi's donations will go towards housing, transportation and player education at the MLS Academies.

One of the key focuses will be academics outside of the soccer field. Audi Performance Centers will be established at select MLS Academy locations, offering players access to tutorial help and technology.

Audi is also getting fans involved through a social media campaign. Consumers can post on Twitter or Instagram with a mention of @audi and a specific hashtag for their team.

The team with the most mentions at the end of the season will get an additional \$50,000 for its academy.



The Orland City Soccer Club's Academy will be one of the first with an Audi Performance Center. Image credit: Orlando City Soccer Club

Getting the word out about the initiative, former soccer player and ESPN commentator Taylor Twellman has been named the ambassador for the campaign.

In 2018, Audi expanded its multi-year partnership with Major League Soccer, as it aims to remain a fixture in the minds of enthusiastic American soccer fans.

Audi of America will be the league's official automotive partner through the 2022 season and continue to serve as title sponsor of the MLS Cup Playoffs. With the most millennial fans of any United States sports league, MLS has an audience that Audi and other luxury brands are hoping to turn into buyers ([see story](#)).

"Audi has been an invaluable supporter of Major League Soccer and our clubs since 2015, and this new initiative to support MLS Academies is extraordinary," said Todd Durbin, executive vice president for competition and player relations at MLS, in a statement. "A forward-thinking partner, Audi recognizes the value of collaborating with MLS in advancing the game across North America.

"We look forward to working with Audi to positively impact the next generation of soccer players for many years to come," he said.

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