

PDL 2006 Schedule Announced

Season kicks off April 29 in Laredo and Fresno

TAMPA, FL – United Soccer Leagues announced Wednesday the 2006 Premier Development League regular season schedule. The 472-game, 59-team schedule opens Saturday, April 29 in Laredo, Texas and Fresno, California.

The 2006 PDL Opening Night will feature the Austin Lightning visiting the Laredo Heat in Mid South Division action and the Fresno Fuego playing host to the San Diego Gauchos in the Southwest Division opener.

The defending champion Des Moines Menace will open their season with the first matchup in the Heartland Division on the road against the expansion St Louis Lions Saturday, May 13.

The 2005 finalist El Paso Patriots begin defense of their Southern Conference title at home against the New Orleans Shell Shockers Friday, May 12.

The season will begin in earnest the first weekend of May with 13 matches as the South Atlantic, New England, Northeast, Southeast and Northwest Divisions open play. The Mid Atlantic Division's first action will be May 12 with the Great Lakes opening last on May 13.

"The past few seasons have seen a marked increase in the level of play throughout the league and we look forward to another outstanding year in the PDL," said PDL Director of Operations Steve Clamp.

The season concludes Sunday, July 23 with eight matches with the playoffs following the same format as 2005 and beginning the following weekend with the four-team conference championship tournaments, each hosted by one its four participants. The league semifinals will be the weekend of July 30 with the PDL Championship game Saturday, August 5.