

In Texas, everything is bigger, including the growth of Texas Rush.

Under the leadership of [Technical Director Don Gemmell](#), Texas Rush has grown 300% from a fledgling membership of 600 in 2005 to nearly 2,500 members today.

But when Don traded his Michigan snow boots for Texas cowboy boots, he had no idea how big the challenge would be to develop a robust Rush franchise in Texas.

### **Community Void**

The Woodlands, which is a Houston suburb, had a void for teens who wanted to play at all levels of soccer. Traditionally, kids would join 1 of the 2 small clubs when they were young and then transfer to another established and entrenched club about 30 minutes away, especially if they wanted to play competitive soccer.

The formation of Texas Rush changed this dramatically. The 2 small clubs were merged and Texas Rush was born, thereby providing the first-ever opportunity for kids in The Woodlands area to play their entire youth career in the community.

### **Commitment to Community**



“There was not a more challenging geographic area in which to start,” Don explained. “Previously the local clubs acted as feeders for the larger Houston clubs, so families didn’t have a reason to stay in the community. We wanted to change that and give kids an opportunity to play at any level, and as long as they wanted, right here in The Woodlands area.”

The former Michigan State Youth Soccer Director of Coaching stepped up to the challenge by finding an aggressive staff that connected with the local kids. They set out to market and promote

the new club by:

- Showing the competitive opportunity available with Rush by starting new Player Development Friendlies
- Getting out the word about Rush by putting up signage and beefing up the Web site with more information about Rush programs and development
- Attracting kids to the club by starting summer and winter-break camps that were previously unavailable in the area
- Offering new competitive opportunities for the older boys with the U.S. Soccer Development Academy and ECNL for the older girls, making Texas Rush the only club in Houston to have both
- Developing sponsorships so the staff could spend more time coaching
- Establishing opportunities for players of all levels and interests to participate from recreational to special needs, competitive and everything in between

## **Expanding Horizons**

It's a good thing Texas Rush has a professional office with administrators and a remarkable group of coaches to assist with the growing club, especially since the goals are to double the club membership by 2018 and to continue to make the Rush experience accessible to all.

"We have a tournament every summer with 200 teams," explained Don. "Every nickel goes toward scholarships for kids who cannot afford to play."

With a local club that has a heart – and development program -- the size of Texas, The Woodlands' kids and parents can stay right in their community and get a great soccer experience right on their doorstep.

## **Texas Rush Highlights**

Texas Rush has a long list of accomplishments, including:

- Membership growing from 600 to nearly 2,500 in just 7 years
- Teams earning league and tournament championships
- Drafting of Texas Rush U.S. Development Academy players in the 2013 MLS draft

- Competitive players earning scholarships and joining collegiate teams
- Members being named to state and regional ODP teams
- Former players recognized on the National Soccer Coaches of America Association's All-American team
- Players earning spots on Rush Select teams
- Developing the 3v3 Winter Blast tournament with 180 teams

A list of accomplishments for 2012 can be seen here:

<http://texasrush.com/images/ClubNews/Year%20in%20Review%202012%20compressed.pdf>