

Stratigakis joins women's national soccer team for camp

By Jake Courtepatte

Sarah Stratigakis is inching closer to the highest level of women's soccer in the world.

The Aurora United FC standout, and League 1 Ontario superstar, has earned an invite to Canada Soccer's Women's National team's first training camp of 2017 ahead of a test match against Mexico in early February.

While the training camp serves as a reorientation and conditioning stint for returning players, it is also an opportunity for executives to scout incoming talent such as Stratigakis, who has been a staple at the international level in younger age groups for years.

With three of the national squad's key members ? Melissa Tancredi, Marie-Eve Nault, and Rhian Wilkinson ? retiring there could be room for Stratigakis to make her move to the next level.

?Many of the young players coming into this camp have just experienced FIFA youth international competition, so bringing them into the Women's National Team environment now continues their development and gives them more opportunities to grow as players within the Canadian system,? said team head coach John Herdman. ?Giving young players this experience is an important part of their development and provides a critical assessment touch point for our technical staff.?

Scoring at almost a goal-per-game pace in Aurora's first season of League 1 action in 2016, the seventeen-year old finished sixth in league scoring, potting nine including a hat trick in the final game of the regular season in August.

Making her debut with the Canadian youth program in 2013, Stratigakis has represented Canada at the U-17 level three times and in the U-20 twice, but this week's camp will mark her first instance training with the senior squad. She most recently donned the red and white at September's U-17 Women's World Cup in Jordan, helping Canada to a 3 ? 2 victory over Cameroon with a game-winning penalty kick.

She is one of three players invited to the camp under the age of eighteen.

Joining Stratigakis from League 1 is Alex Lamontagne of Durham United FC, who played just four games with the club in 2016. Canada Soccer's Women's National Team will play at home for the first time since capturing back-to-back bronze medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics when they take on Mexico in an international friendly in Vancouver on Saturday, February 4, BC Place.