

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Monday, January 23, 2017

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## **3rd-annual "Highway 99 Derby" between Sacramento Republic FC & Fresno Fuego scheduled for February 18**

*Sacramento, an aspiring MLS club, escaped Fresno with a win on penalty kicks last March*

FRESNO, Calif. – The Fresno Fuego (USL Premier Development League) has announced the date and match time for the third playing of the "Highway 99 Derby," an annual showdown against Sacramento Republic FC of the United Soccer League.

Kickoff at Chukchansi Park in Downtown Fresno will be at 7 p.m. on Saturday, February 18. Tickets are now available at FresnoFuego.com and FresnoGrizzlies.com, and at the stadium ticket office. Tickets begin at just \$11, and youth tickets begin at only \$8. Club level tickets are \$22.

"I am looking forward to going back to Fresno and playing the Fuego for the third consecutive year," said Sacramento Republic FC Head Coach and Technical Director Paul Buckle. "The Highway 99 Derby has proved to be a really great preparation for us. They have treated us well and we are excited to go back down there and play a very good Fresno side. This will be another good gauge of where we are at this preseason."

The two squads played to a 90-minute draw less than a year ago in a thriller at Chukchansi Park. Sacramento prevailed 5-3 on penalty kicks after coming back on the Fuego with the game-tying goal in the 86<sup>th</sup> minute. Sacramento is eying the state capital as a potential Major League Soccer market. In that pursuit, Sacramento signed two of the Fuego's premier players, forwards Christian Chaney and Elliot Hord following the 2016 PDL season. It is likely each will be suiting up for Republic FC against their former hometown team on February 18 in Fresno.

"The Highway 99 Derby will be a wonderful opportunity for our fans to get an early glimpse of the local 2017 Fuego roster in a match-up against one of the best professional soccer clubs in the country," said Fresno Fuego General Manager Jeremy Schultz. The USL, the league the Republic play in, recently granted them Division 2 status, putting Sacramento in a division one level below Major League Soccer. As Fresno continues to show incredible growth in its soccer fan base, this game is a perfect chance for our community to come together against a top notch opponent."

The Fuego enter 2017 coming off a Central Pacific Division title and a 10-3-1 record. The 2017 regular season schedule will be released in February by the PDL. 2017 Fuego season tickets will be available at the Chukchansi Park box office when the schedule is released, and online at FresnoFuego.com.

**#FresnoFuego #ForCityAndClub**

### **ABOUT THE FRESNO FUEGO**

The Fresno Fuego are five-time division champions in the USL Premier Development League (PDL), the fourth tier of the American Soccer Pyramid, the top level of amateur soccer in North America. Founded in 2003, the team competes in the newly-formed Central Pacific Division of the PDL Western Conference. More than 50 Fuego players have moved on to sign professional contracts. The team plays its home games in the heart of Downtown Fresno at Chukchansi Park. Season Tickets, Group and Birthday packages, and fundraising options for the 2017 season are currently available by contacting Jordan Wiebe at [jwiebe@fresnogrizzlies.com](mailto:jwiebe@fresnogrizzlies.com).