

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Wednesday, February 8

Media Contact: Paul Braverman, Media Relations (pbraverman@fresnogrizzlies.com)

## **Fresno Fuego to battle another pro foe at Chukchansi Park; Reno 1868 FC of United Soccer League**

*Reno and Sacramento friendlies will make two exhibition matches vs. USL clubs in two weeks in Downtown Fresno*

FRESNO, Calif. – The Fresno Fuego (USL Premier Development League) has announced another preseason exhibition match, against Reno 1868 FC of the United Soccer League on Saturday, March 4. Following the Fuego's match against Sacramento Republic FC on February 18 (7 p.m., tickets on sale), it will make two USL opponents (one level below Major League Soccer) taking on Fresno at Chukchansi Park in two weeks.

The Reno match in Downtown Fresno will also kickoff at 7 p.m. on March 4. Tickets are available now at FresnoFuego.com and FresnoGrizzlies.com, and at the stadium ticket office. Tickets begin at just \$10, and youth tickets begin at only \$7. Club level tickets are \$15. Ticket prices are the same for the "Highway 99 Derby," the annual exhibition between Fresno and Sacramento later this month (2/18).

"I'm really looking forward to playing against the Fresno Fuego," said Ian Russell, head coach of Reno 1868 FC. "They always put a good team on the field and have an excellent supporters group."

"This will be a great experience for our team," said Andy Smith, general manager of Reno 1868 FC. "Fresno Fuego is a solid side and an exceptional organization."

The 2017 season is the inaugural campaign in the USL for Reno 1868 FC. Like the Fuego, Reno shares it's home (Greater Nevada Field) with the Reno Aces of Triple-A Baseball, a divisional rival of the Fresno Grizzlies. Meeting on the pitch, in addition to the diamond was a logical next step in a developing and healthy sports rivalry between the two cities.

"In bringing soccer games of this caliber, it proves the standard of our Fuego organization; Fresno is a thriving soccer city and professional clubs trust that we can provide a match that will help prepare them for their upcoming season," said Fuego General Manager Jeremy Schultz. "The great Fuego fans deserve a taste of professional soccer at home each year; our players take great pride in representing our city and competing against these clubs."

Schultz pointed out another advantage of Fresno playing up against USL teams is the opportunity for Fuego players to be evaluated by professional clubs in pursuit of USL, and ultimately MLS contracts. Two Fresno forwards from last season's roster, Christian Chaney and Elliott Hord, have since signed with Sacramento Republic FC.

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 later this month by the PDL. 2017 Fuego season tickets are on sale now, and anyone purchasing season tickets prior to March 4 will have the Reno match included free of charge.

**#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).