



Texas Rush players traveled to Madrid, Spain as part of 'Rush Select' - Payton Miller, Hunter Hayden, Robert Frusina and Roberto Hernandez.



A brief interview with Payton Miller, U16 USSDA:

1. What was the most enjoyable part of the trip to Real Madrid?

The most enjoyable part of the trip was getting to spend time with my Rush Select teammates, many of them I have known for several years. One of my best friends on the team now plays for the

Colorado Rush U16 Academy team and we actually played against each other 2 weeks before we left for Spain at Bear Branch.

2. What were the five things that you will take away from the trip / experience?

- A. Passion of Spanish fans (we saw one La Liga game and one Champions league game at the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium)
- B. The high level of technical and tactical ability of Spanish youth players.
- C. I saw how the best youth players are treated in a true residency program (lots of attention and perks) at a large professional club.
- D. The high level of importance paid to small details during training and games (against Real Madrid's youth academy, a defender was immediately pulled from the game for one bad decision)
- E. Although all of the Spanish players are very good players, I felt I was able to be competitive against them. This gave me a lot of confidence coming back to play in the US Academy.

3. Who was the most famous football/soccer person you met?

I met Fernando Hierro. He played 13 years with Real Madrid and made 89 appearances with the Spanish national team. He made the World Cup All Star Team in 2002 and was the UEFA Defender of the Year in 1998.

4. Describe the training environment?

A very nice and secluded training environment at Real Madrid's training complex. All of the fields were in excellent condition and no other teams were near us during training. This really helped with concentration during the training (no outside distractions, especially NO PARENTS).

5. If you played games, whom did you play against and what was the score and what did you learn from the games?

Game 1: Against Rayo Vallecano U16 (La Liga team) lost 2-0.

Game 2: Against Real Madrid's U16, lost 8-0 (we didn't feel too bad because we watched them beat a league opponent a few days earlier 8-1).

Game 3: Against Los Rozas U16 (2nd Division team), tied 2-2. In the first two games especially, the speed of play was extremely fast and once we turned the ball over, we had to work extremely hard to get it back. It was obvious that the Spanish teams were better at controlling the flow of the game and keeping possession of the ball.

6. What position did you play in the games? If the position was different than you have played in the US, what did you learn from this?

I played both holding midfield and outside back while in Spain. I am currently playing center back for the U16 Academy team but have played both positions previously.

7. What advice can you give back to players in Texas Rush / teammates after having gone through this experience?

Continue to train hard and improve weekly so if an opportunity to play abroad or with a Select team presents itself, you are able to perform at your best.

8. How will this trip / experience help you as an individual go forward in your development?

This trip really made me become aware of the areas I need to improve on going forward. It also showed me the level of effort and commitment it takes to be a top-flight soccer player.

9. Give some examples of the differences for a U16 player in Spain is doing vs. a U16 player in the USA / Texas Rush is doing?

The Spanish youth players all have very good technical ability and make smart tactical decisions. The off the ball movement and tactical knowledge was excellent. Spanish players are taught to value possession of the ball and always look to make the “smart” pass.

10. What's the number one thing you need to improve on (soccer) based upon your experience on going on this trip?

The number one area I need to improve on is better and quicker decision making both with and without the ball.