



XULA Contact: Regi Reyes  
(504) 520-5240 | [rreyes@xula.edu](mailto:rreyes@xula.edu)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Fútbol is headed to Xavier University of Louisiana!

New Orleans, La. – The most popular sport in the world, played by more than 240 million people,<sup>1</sup> is coming to Xavier University of Louisiana. The institution announced that it will launch both men’s and women’s soccer for the fall 2023 season. The University will offer the city’s first intercollegiate varsity men’s program since 1985. Xavier’s deep commitment to broadening opportunities for current and future students will holistically support its students as they develop their minds and bodies.

“Xavier is elated to welcome men’s and women’s football or soccer, as it is called here in America, for the 2023 fall season,” said **Dr. Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana**. “Xavier supports the complete development of our students; thus, we are constantly expanding offerings, both in and out of the classroom, that allow students to explore their interests and advance their skills. I look forward to cheering on our teams as they win their first game.”

No intercollegiate varsity soccer program has existed in New Orleans athletics since 2006. Xavier will be the only men’s varsity program at a four-year historically black institution in the southern part of the state. Additionally, the institution will field the first women’s varsity team in New Orleans since Loyola in 2006 and Tulane in 2005. The school will sponsor 16 intercollegiate teams in 2023-24.

The University’s soccer club was established in 2015 through Xavier’s Office of Recreation and Club Sports. Now both varsity teams will represent Xavier in intercollegiate competition as part of the 2023 NAIA’s Red River Athletic Conference.

“A recent study shows that soccer is the fastest growing team sport in the United States,” **Xavier Executive Director of Athletics and Recreation Nathan Cochran** said. “Xavier is delighted to introduce men’s and women’s soccer as we continue our expansion of varsity sport offerings.”

The addition of the sport was initially proposed several years ago. With the support of President Verret and Vice President of Student Affairs Curtis Wright, Cochran brought the popular sport to the nation’s only historically Black and Catholic Institution to increase intercollegiate athletics on campus.

The introduction of soccer to Xavier’s roster is a continuation of the development of the University’s Athletics program, which has a history of excellence early on. Initiated in 2019, Xavier’s Co-ed Competitive Cheer team made history as the first HBCU to win first place in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) in 2022. Last year, men’s indoor track

and field returned to the University, and the institution [reestablished its baseball program and launched the first softball team in the school's history](#). The baseball team was then [seeded as number one in the Black College World Series](#), while the men's track and field [won the team championship in the Red River Athletic Conference \(RRAC\)](#) meet in April.

"School spirit will go up a lot! Soccer excites a lot of people on campus, so being more involved with students and the athletic team is beyond exciting. Adding a new team is like adding another family to Xavier," said **Najah Nicholas, a junior studying biology pre-med**.

Academic scholarships will also be available for players. Prospective student-athletes interested in joining the team can fill out online questionnaires for the [men's team](#) and the [women's team](#).

Xavier is currently seeking a head coach for both teams. Qualified candidates interested in the position must submit a cover letter and a resume via email to Ed Cassiere, the associate athletics director for strategic communications, at [ecassier@xula.edu](mailto:ecassier@xula.edu).

1. Sports Industry: A Research Guide <https://guides.loc.gov/sports-industry/soccer>

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## **About Xavier University of Louisiana**

*Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.*

*Established in 1925, by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African American and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula is to provide students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at [www.xula.edu](http://www.xula.edu) or contact Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5240 or [rreyes@xula.edu](mailto:rreyes@xula.edu).*



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