1. **US Soccer Development Academy**
   Players must now choose between playing for their High School or Club
   Season will be 10 months – (September through June)
   More training – fewer games – better environment – a more unified approach
   A more professional approach – facility, coaches, talent level of players
   More competitive game schedule
   Better exposure to the next higher levels – World Cup, Professional
   **Goal is to catch up with the rest of the soccer-playing world**
   “This will put us in line with top programs around the world”
   78 Academy Programs throughout the country – 3000 Academy players

2. **High School Soccer (Arguments against)**
   Compact season of high game to practice ratio
   Variety of talent levels
   Discrepancy of coaching experience
   School facilities
   Different levels of competition
   Higher risk of injury due to high intensity season and possible field conditions

3. **Values of High School Soccer**
   Lifelong memories of representing your school
   Tradition – Rivalries
   Camaraderie
   Local media exposure
   Educational process
   Play with players from different clubs – integrate with a variety of playing styles
   Better players may have bigger roles in the team and develop into a more complete player -- take on added responsibility
   Players from Freshman through Senior year may be on the same team – better opportunity for the good young players to be challenged and develop
   Rules, regulations, standards – academic eligibility and citizenship standards
   School soccer prepare student-athletes for the college student-athlete experience
   Very few of the players will ever reach the highest levels in the game, so the experiences become more important
4. **Hidden facts of the Academy program**

We are not like Europe and South America
Our culture values school sports
Our academies do not resemble the European Academies
Coaches are not at the level they could/should be
Coaching education programs needs to improve
Very little professionalism in the Club system
Starting at the wrong age – need to start at age 12-14

**Development at the older ages is very limited in terms of growth opportunities** –
The season is September –early December – break – start up again in March-June
Looking to identify the top 1% -- at the expense of everyone else
There are not 3000 elite players in the country
The same players, with the same coaches on the same facilities does not equal better
Something has to change in the area of players, coaches, facilities - to improve the final product
Academies world-wide are failing -- only @ 1% of the players make the highest level, the rest drop out, are released, or play in lower divisions.
Academies world-wide value an education-related program for the 99% failure rate
The concept is good, but the reality of the way it is being done is not
Project 2010 has long since come and gone and hardly anyone knows about it, remembers it or ever talks about it. Its goal was for the USA to win the 2010 World Cup!
At the end of the day, teams find the best players at the lowest cost to them – the influx of players from West Africa is overwhelming at the professional level
The EPL has only @ 35% English players on the rosters

**Very expensive financial undertaking with no guarantee of proportionate return**

5. **Minorities and MSL-funded Academies**

Minorities are seldom involved due to cost and transportation
Many elite players go undiscovered because they are the minorities in the inner city
This may mean more ethnic, immigrant and minority players – not the suburban player
There are fewer and fewer spots available at all levels now for the home-grown American player --
More and more ‘imports’ are finding their way into the higher level teams
The best players always are found – no matter where they are
Watch out for the MLS fully-funded Academy programs

Every MLS team should be mandated to fully-fund an Academy team and do this in a professional way in conjunction with the professional team, its facilities and staff. The Academy season should run concurrent with the MLS season and not take the 2 month break in the winter. The best players, minorities included, will have a chance to play without the financial burden – now the cost to play is very high, too high for some.

Eric Wynalda in a recent interview of Sepp Blatter (President of FIFA) asked him what country the USA should model for our advancement in world soccer and the response was SWITZERLAND – the answer was shocking to me but the explanation was spot on – Blatter said that Switzerland has relaxed its immigration policies and more ‘naturalized’ players are now available to the Swiss National Team – and the Swiss U17 won the U17 World Cup in 2009 and the senior team did not lose a game in the 2010 World Cup.

The goal is to find the best players who can help improve the final product --