

Club vs School Soccer

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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 --