



**Washington Youth Soccer
Final
Strategic Change Plan
September 2009**

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1. Description of Organizational Development & Planning Process

Washington State Youth Soccer Association has envisioned and planned for reform of its structure and operating systems for many years, under several different state administrations. In 2005, the board developed a bullet-point strategic plan, highlighting a need to “professionalize the board and staff.” In 2008, Washington Youth Soccer launched a Constitutional Convention process to formally begin the planning and restructuring required to achieve its goals.

To facilitate the Constitutional Convention process, Washington Youth Soccer hired a nonprofit consulting company, Jan Glick & Associates (JGA), in July of 2008. JGA facilitated an initial assessment incorporating the following elements:

- Interviews with 12 of 14 board members, the Executive Director, 2 previous board members and one previous large association President.
- Phone interviews with Executive Directors of US Youth Soccer, Florida Youth Soccer, Indiana Youth Soccer
- Review of bylaws, administrative handbook
- Review of financial reports
- Extensive review of Indiana Youth Soccer’s similar process, including revised governance process, overhauled operations and planning process, goals and results to date.

Following the assessment, the board of directors held a planning retreat at which the key elements of board restructuring were discussed and agreed upon. The result of the retreat is largely reflected in the governance section of the plan below.

Over the course of the fall and winter of 2008-2009, two Council meetings were held to convey the vision of the plan and restructure to the association members, and the consultants met with the boards of directors of every district in the state, soliciting feedback. Two committees were formed to flesh out a more detailed proposal for how the future organization would operate:

- Rules & operating documents committee
- Seamless soccer task force

A first draft plan was developed based on the input of the many board and committee members, and the draft plan and related documents (i.e. roles and responsibilities in proposed new system) were posted on the Washington Youth Soccer web site. As discussion and feedback from the board and the committees evolved, updated drafts were posted on the web site.

In March, 2009, the seamless soccer task force held a planning retreat, at which the latest details included in this plan were discussed.

This is a document that reflects a Constitutional Convention which is, and will be, a work-in-process. This draft represents a well-considered direction, yet much work needs to be done to complete, a final plan, begin to implement it, and adjust as necessary.

Primary Stakeholders in Planning Process

Washington Youth Soccer Board of Directors

Doug Andreassen, President
Laurie Myers, 1st VP of Administration
Cynthia J. Spencer, Secretary
George Maitland, Treasurer
Dave Miller, VP of Development
Bryan Vasbinder, VP of Recreation
Gail Zimbelman, VP of Competition
Jan Phillips, District 1 Commissioner
Larry Mana'o, District 2 Commissioner
Stu Snow, District 3 Commissioner
Kasey O'Leary, District 4 Commissioner
Troy Maxcy, District 5 Commissioner
Mike Terris, District 6 Commissioner
Ken Phillipson, District 7 Commissioner

Rules & Operating Documents Committee

Steve Scranton
Brian Lawler
Laurie Myers
Stu Snow

Seamless Soccer Task Force

Lance Calloway, District 1
Mike Murphy, District 1
Jim Bates, District 2
Dave Shipway, District 2
George Pfeiffer, District 3
Perry Woodford, District 3
Louie Bond, District 4
Jeff Hulse, District 6
Jason Quintero, District 6
James Charette, District 7
Devin Proctor, District 7
Rich Pallichio, District 7
Jan Smisek, Director of Coaching, Sunset Hills Recreational Soccer Club
Dave Schumacher, Director of Coaching, Washington Youth Soccer
Jan Phillips, District 1 Commissioner
Todd Lincoln, Executive Director, PDL

Principal Consultants: Jan Glick & Associates

Jan Glick, President
Yolanka Wulff, Senior Consultant

2. Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

To foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of the State of Washington's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition.

Vision and Values

Washington Youth Soccer strives to:

- Be the model organization for youth sports in Washington State
- Be the ultimate resource for youth soccer in Washington State
- Provide a seamless range of soccer opportunities for youth in Washington State
- Be financially sound, with one year's operating reserves and an asset management plan that protects and builds Washington Youth Soccer assets

Washington Youth Soccer:

- Promotes a positive, healthy and safe playing environment
- Builds character through a focus on FIFA "Fair Play and Good Sportsmanship"
- Promotes integrity and high ethical standards
- Encourages teamwork, leadership, respect and family values through the sport of soccer
- Is dependable, accountable and responsive towards its members
- Is well managed and fiscally responsible
- Is forward thinking, creative and innovative

Primary Goal for 2009-2012: Develop a Seamless Soccer System Providing Developmentally Correct Playing Opportunities for all Players

Objectives

- Developmentally correct playing opportunities for all players (regardless of potential or obsolete administrative barriers), with seamless access to, and movement among, leagues, cups and programs
- Increased flexibility to provide more user-friendly experience (both players and parents) and reduce conflicts between skill levels/levels of play
- Expanded opportunities for like vs. like competition with less travel and reduced administrative burden

Overarching Principles

Flexibility: The system and structures within Washington Youth Soccer should allow maximum flexibility for players and parents to understand and navigate the system, especially to allow easier administration of player movement to an appropriate level of play.

Choice:

- Provide playing choices that allow play within a recreational values system as well as different choices that allow play within a competitive values system.
- Provide mid-tier choices that allow a middle ground between these two poles.
- At recreational and lower levels of select play, players should have options for playing & practicing close to home, as well as for additional training, coaching and play that improves their level of play.

Collaboration: All administrative levels (state, district, association & club) should recognize that youth soccer is a very complex system with a long history and established culture. If organizations and individuals don't work together, we won't be able to create a seamless system for players and parents.

Spirit of Reinvention [if at one you don't succeed, try, try again]: Developing a truly seamless system that provides flexibility and choice will take time, creativity, risk-taking (in program/system design), etc. Just because a problem has seemed insurmountable in the past shouldn't stop future proposed solutions. New ideas should be welcomed; people should not be blamed for failed efforts or false starts.

Organizational Principles

Separate Governance from Management: Governance functions such as financial management, fundraising, board of directors' development and evaluation of executive staff are often underperformed by non profit boards, and soccer organizations are no exception. By separating

governance functions and committees from operating functions and committees, such as player development, fields, competition, etc., more refined and better processes can be developed to address all relevant issues. For example, the state board has proposed eliminating the VPs of recreation, competition, development and administration, with the various functions being replaced by a combination of staff and operating committees, thereby allowing the board members to focus on governance functions, with more resources and energy applied to all functions.

Evaluation, Data Gathering & Feedback: Washington Youth Soccer is in the midst of reinventing itself, with the process likely to evolve over many years. Both existing process and changes should be carefully considered and evaluated both prior to and after any changes, with an objective being continuous improvement. A process for feedback and evaluation, based on sound data, should be built into state, district and association level processes.

Apply a can-do approach to barriers: Solve problems through solutions that allow flexibility; solve player play and placement issues/problems through a can-do approach instead of limiting choices to old paradigms. For example, when faced with the issue of 8 and 9 year old players (who should be playing 6 a side), playing up in the PDL's U-11 at 9 a side, Washington Youth Soccer reinforced using a mini-soccer program open to all 8 and 9 year olds instead of setting down a hard and fast rule to stop the PDL practice.

Principles for Soccer Play

Create Rules based on Policies and Principles, that Allow Situation-Specific Interpretation: The Washington Youth Soccer Board of Directors is currently developing a revised set of rules that are policy- and principle-based. The draft new rules documents will be user-friendly, with rules simplified when possible. Policies, Procedures and Rules of the Game will each have separate sections

Apply United States Soccer Federation Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States; allow local organizations to determine how to implement these practices

- Recognize that Directors of Coaching at many of the state's top teams are in conflict with these practices
- Educate parents that travelling away from their home area to find the most competitive team for ages 4 to approximately 13 is inappropriate. Strongly recommend playing in home association for recreational play up to age 13.

Reduce barriers to play across organizational and league boundaries to allow player development options and flexibility:

- Develop a system that allows opportunities play across geographical boundaries.
- To limit games, add training and monitor youth soccer development on a more professional level, player movement flexibility is desired. In order to have players passing between leagues at all levels, however, there needs to be coach accountability and rigorous tracking and recording of player registration and movement. For example, if the league administrative body says a player must only play two halves in a day, then there needs to be consequences for a coach if they violate the policy, and, each

competition needs to be tracked. Ideally, such tracking (rostering per game by half) could be done electronically, but if such technology is not available, a manual system should be used.

This relates to the higher end players/teams/leagues, but this concept could also be applied to the player pass with consequences for violation. To achieve this objective, a player pass concept can be implemented as a developmental tool for U-11 to U-14 select play, coupled with the following conditions to avoid abuse:

- Limited number of uses
 - Guaranteed half game playing time
 - Registration (ideally online) to record player affiliation, and rostering per game by half
 - Evaluate player pass system to determine extent to which it is working; set up evaluation system in advance
- ❑ Find a way to allow player movement within recreational play, across teams. One option is to change registration to be at association level

Seamless Soccer: Concept Overview, Goals & Principles

Note: Details for each level on subsequent pages

	Recreational/Local		Select/Developmental		Premier/Regional
Goals	Fun, exercise, teamwork, sportsmanship, listening, basic soccer skills, self-discipline, friendships	Flexibility between recreational & select to allow movement both ways	All recreational goals+ focus on skill development, preparing for next level of play. But – freedom to play other sports as well	Seamless & more flexible coordination between select and premier Emphasis on providing player-centric placement & coaching	All select goals, + developing players to their fullest potential through coaching, individual feedback, and developing passion for the game.
Travel	Low. Objective = practice and play close to home		Moderate; Balance of practice & play near home & need for more competition		Higher; Statewide play and more frequent competition beyond local
Competitive Emphasis	See goals above; not a competitive emphasis		While a competitive environment, primary emphasis is on skill development and improvement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Team success (i.e. winning) is a factor. o Player development should be at the foundation of the premier mission at all ages.
Flexibility	Yes – see details of plan		Yes – see details of plan		Limited
Age factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Need new guidelines for age appropriate practice & play for U-7 <input type="checkbox"/> Need better programs, greater emphasis on recreational options 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> U-11 to U-13 = transitional period; players explore higher levels of play; accepted into these programs, not cut, encouraged to participate in other sports and activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on creating dynamic, challenging, fun environment; establish sound technical and tactical habits. <input type="checkbox"/> U-14 Players can decide to remain with premier club, move to select or return to the recreational level 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> U-11 to U-13 currently places too much emphasis on winning; needs to be more fun. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal = insure that rec. goals such as sportsmanship & friendship are equally important esp. for U-11 to U-13.
Coaching design & objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create age-appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Promote fun, enjoyment <input type="checkbox"/> Positive role model <input type="checkbox"/> Playing is more important than winning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create age-appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> All recreational objectives + Prepare kids for next level of play <input type="checkbox"/> A goal is to reduce poaching/recruitment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All select objectives + following: <input type="checkbox"/> A goal is to reduce poaching/recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Help establish coaching standards and evaluation criteria (see following pages)
Coaching Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set standards based on Washington Youth Soccer certificate classes <input type="checkbox"/> Train coaches re: non competitive goals; coaches don't "own" players; <input type="checkbox"/> Allow players to move to higher levels based on ability 		Professional development & performance standards for both volunteer and paid coaches		Rigorous coaching standards (see following pages)

Seamless Soccer: Recreational Play (Proposed new name: Local)

Note: As per overview on previous page, the recreational system below is envisioned to connect to the select system (on the right side) as shown below, in a continuous, seamless way.

Recreational/Local Play									
Goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Fun <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to & working with a coach <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Soccer Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Self-discipline; <input type="checkbox"/> Sportsmanship <input type="checkbox"/> Socializing and friendships								
Travel	Low: Objective = Practice, train & play close to home								
Number of games	Low-Moderate; with flexibility								
Cost	Low								
Parent education, expectation & family impact	<input type="checkbox"/> What is expected of parents and what do they expect at recreational level? <input type="checkbox"/> Family impact -- How are families affected by children playing rec soccer? Expectations and mitigations?								
Competition	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce emphasis on competition and teams at ages 10 and under. <input type="checkbox"/> Principle = Establish/shift toward players and parents seeing value in, and having pride in their club and association to a larger extent, instead of so much emphasis and pride in the team.								
Flexibility & Choice factors	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement player pass concept as a developmental tool for U-11 to U-14, coupled with guaranteed half game playing time to avoid abuse.								
Age factors	<input type="checkbox"/> USSF guidelines for age appropriate practice & play <input type="checkbox"/> More & better programs, greater emphasis on recreational options such as free and/or low-cost, fun, flexible training modules for all rec. players, clubs and coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide soccer development program in partnership with primary schools and local coaches, to bring free and low-cost soccer options to more interested players and families								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>U-7</th> <th>U-8 to U-10</th> <th>U-11 to U-13</th> <th>U-14 to U-19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate, fun environment (different from U-8 to U-10) <input type="checkbox"/> De-emphasize "teams," playing more important than winning <input type="checkbox"/> Small sided play, selected randomly, weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Take pressure out of playing environment <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Role Model </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate technique & tactics <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Development of age appropriate technique & tactic – coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Needs more work <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ed teams <input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in roster to support playing time? </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	U-7	U-8 to U-10	U-11 to U-13	U-14 to U-19	<input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate, fun environment (different from U-8 to U-10) <input type="checkbox"/> De-emphasize "teams," playing more important than winning <input type="checkbox"/> Small sided play, selected randomly, weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Take pressure out of playing environment <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Role Model	<input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate technique & tactics <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game	<input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Development of age appropriate technique & tactic – coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs more work <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ed teams <input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in roster to support playing time?
U-7	U-8 to U-10	U-11 to U-13	U-14 to U-19						
<input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate, fun environment (different from U-8 to U-10) <input type="checkbox"/> De-emphasize "teams," playing more important than winning <input type="checkbox"/> Small sided play, selected randomly, weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Take pressure out of playing environment <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Role Model	<input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate technique & tactics <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game	<input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Development of age appropriate technique & tactic – coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs more work <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ed teams <input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in roster to support playing time?						
Coaching Design & Objectives									
Volunteer Coaching Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Set standards based on Washington Youth Soccer certificate classes <input type="checkbox"/> Provide mentoring for parent coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Train coaches on philosophy of recreational soccer; non competitive goals <input type="checkbox"/> Create understanding that coaches don't "own" players; <input type="checkbox"/> De-focus winning or team centric outlook <input type="checkbox"/> Get coaches to release players to the game; give up control as a coach; allow players to move to higher level teams/leagues based on their ability if that's right for them								
Paid professional coaches	N/A								

Flexibility between recreational & select to allow movement both ways

Seamless Soccer: Select Play (Proposed new name: Developmental)

Note: As per overview page, the select system below is envisioned to connect to the recreational system (on the left side) and premier system (on the right side) as shown below, in a continuous, seamless way.

		Select/Developmental Play		Coordination required between select and premier to address skill level and placement	
Goals	Flexibility between recreational & select to allow movement both ways	All recreational goals (Fun, Exercise, Teamwork, Listening to & working with a coach, Self-discipline; Sportsmanship, Socializing and friendships) + focus on skill development, preparing for next level of play.			
Travel		Higher; Statewide play and more frequent competition beyond local			
Number of games		Moderate			
Cost		Strive to keep costs down			
Parent education, expectation & family impact		<input type="checkbox"/> What is expected of parents and what do they expect at select level? <input type="checkbox"/> Family impact -- How are families affected by children playing soccer at select level? Expectations and mitigations?			
Competitive Emphasis		While a competitive environment, primary emphasis is on skill development and improvement. Freedom to play other sports as well			
Flexibility & Choice factors		<input type="checkbox"/> Implement player pass concept as a developmental tool for U-11 to U-14, coupled with guaranteed half game playing time to avoid abuse.			
Age factors, Coaching Design & Objectives		U-11 to U-13			U-14 to U-19
		<input type="checkbox"/> A goal is to reduce poaching/recruitment			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Develop age appropriate technique & tactic; coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare kids for next level of play <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game	<input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Development of age appropriate technique & tactic – coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game		
Volunteer Coaching Management		<input type="checkbox"/> Set standards based on Washington Youth Soccer certificate classes <input type="checkbox"/> Provide mentoring for parent coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to coaches based on parent and player evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Create understanding that coaches don't "own" players; De-focus winning or team centric outlook <input type="checkbox"/> Get coaches to release players to the game; give up control as a coach; allow players to move to higher level teams/leagues based on their ability if that's right for them			
Paid professional coaching Management		<input type="checkbox"/> Professional development & performance standards <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to coaches based on parent and player evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Create understanding that coaches don't "own" players; De-focus winning or team centric outlook <input type="checkbox"/> Get coaches to release players to the game; give up control as a coach; allow players to move to higher level teams/leagues based on their ability if that's right for them			

Seamless Soccer: Premier Play (proposed new name: Regional)

Note: As per overview page, the premier system below is envisioned to connect to the select system (on the left side) as shown below, in a continuous, seamless way.

	Coordination required between select and premier to address skill level and placement	Premier/Regional Play	
Goals		<input type="checkbox"/> All recreational & select goals (Fun, Exercise, Teamwork, Listening to & working with a coach, Self-discipline; Sportsmanship, Socializing and friendships) <input type="checkbox"/> Focus on skill development <input type="checkbox"/> Insure that rec. goals such as sportsmanship & friendship are equally important esp. for U-11 to U-13. <input type="checkbox"/> Developing players to fullest potential through coaching & individual player feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Developing a passion for the game	
Travel		Moderate-High, although objective is to practice & train close to home	
Number of games		High	
Cost		Moderate to high	
Parent education, expectation & family impact		<input type="checkbox"/> What is expected of parents and what do they expect at premier? <input type="checkbox"/> Family impact -- How are families affected by children playing soccer at premier level? Expectations and mitigations?	
Competition		What is the approach to & impact of premier competition? How important? How should it be handled or addressed by coaches?	
Flexibility & Choice factors		<input type="checkbox"/> Implement player pass concept as a developmental tool for U-11 to U-14, coupled with guaranteed half game playing time to avoid abuse.	
Age factors, Coaching Design & Objectives		U-11 to U-13 U-14 to U-19	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Create an age appropriate environment <input type="checkbox"/> Develop age appropriate technique & tactic; coaches handbook <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare kids for next level of play <input type="checkbox"/> Promote enjoyment of game <input type="checkbox"/> A goal is to reduce poaching/recruitment	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Set standards based on Washington Youth Soccer certificate classes <input type="checkbox"/> Train coaches on philosophy of less competitive goals <input type="checkbox"/> Create understanding that coaches don't "own" players; De-focus winning or team centric outlook <input type="checkbox"/> Get coaches to release players to the game; give up control as a coach; allow players to move to higher level teams/leagues based on their ability if that's right for them <input type="checkbox"/> U-11 to U-13 currently places too much emphasis on winning; needs to be more fun & player development	<input type="checkbox"/> Integration of psychological & physical aspects of the game
Volunteer Coaching Management		<input type="checkbox"/> Specific performance standards including feedback to coaches based on parent and player evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Provide mentoring for parent coaches <input type="checkbox"/> Board of directors and ED with capabilities to govern and manage the system <input type="checkbox"/> Establish best practice as to # of hours coaching each player and team <input type="checkbox"/> Establish best practice in communication with board, management, parents and players <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum level of coordination and co-coaching with select coaches/teams	
Paid professional coaching Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Specific performance standards (management by objective) <input type="checkbox"/> 360-degree performance eval's + feedback for coaching mgrs & coaches; Compensation tied to performance (incl. license level, experience, performance as a coach – i.e. feedback from players, parents, administrators and DOCs; not about winning); minimum hours professional dev't annually <input type="checkbox"/> Board of directors and ED with capabilities to govern and manage the system <input type="checkbox"/> Establish best practice as to # of hours coaching each player and team <input type="checkbox"/> Establish best practice in communication with board, mgt, parents and players		

Strategic Questions/Issues:

- Coaching oversight & evaluation system needs to be designed
- Board of directors and ED at District, Association and club levels all require the capabilities to govern and manage the system
- Can consequences be implemented for too much poaching/recruiting?

Goal 2: Restructure Leagues, Districts and Associations to Streamline Program Delivery and Communication

Strategy 2A: Redesign League and Cup Play into four levels (from the current 5-6)

Note that levels of play defined below will likely be renamed to clarify expectations for players and parents. Current name is shown first, followed by proposed new name, as per USSF guidelines. Naming process TBD)

1. Recreational/Local (Includes club and association leagues)
2. Select/Developmental (Includes some District, Inter-Association and State leagues. Corresponds roughly to lower levels of current select play)
3. Select/Advanced Developmental (Includes some District, Inter-Association and State leagues. Corresponds roughly to upper levels of current select play)
4. Premier/Regional (i.e. Current premier and PDL levels)

League play is independent of being tied to play in any particular Cup

Strategy 2B: Establish Standards to Evaluate Player Skill Level at the club level, and allow placement in appropriate league. Factors to be included in establishing such a standard include an individual's:

- Technical skill
- Physical skill
- Tactical skill
- Psychological skill

In addition, a player's commitment and the length of the season need to be considered, as do ties to Cups and weather and field considerations

Establish expectations at each level of play. Explain expectations to parents.

Strategy 2C: Change Soccer Calendar for league play so that all leagues have better defined, and more compatible starting and ending dates, and culminate in a season ending tournament.

Recreational/Local Leagues (Includes club and association leagues)

- 8 week season is ideal, with mid-week games, possibility of 1-2 doubleheader weekends
- President's Cup is culminating tournament
- Both league play and President's Cup are completed by Thanksgiving (possibility of August start to accomplish)
- Expectations regarding when and how teams are formed, and play ends, needs to be clarified and conveyed

Possible Issue: Recreational team definition has loopholes such as when players carpool, friends are invited, or teams have insufficient numbers of players.

Select/ Developmental Leagues (Currently within Select Play)

- 10 game season (optional 12 games to be determined at local level?)
- Commissioner's Cup is culminating tournament
- League play completed by Thanksgiving
- Length of season, start date and girls season TBD
- State mandated tryout dates tied to PDL need to be changed/resolved (Mid-week games, possibility of doubleheader weekends to accomplish?)
- Commissioner's Cup completed by mid-December
- No seeding for Commissioners Cup
- Tie players to teams

Select/Advanced Developmental Leagues (Currently within Select Play)

- Emphasis on Ages 13-17
- Challenge Cup is culminating tournament; but very small
- Challenge Cup goal - to be completed by mid-December; possibility that last rounds may fall in January
- Girls Challenge Cup in spring
- Tryout date TBD – May 15 may not be ideal
- Optional tournaments offered locally in January to May allow
 - o Player-focused time; optional academy-style training
 - o Eastern Washington spring Leagues

Issue: Let new state league needs to be designed

Premier/Regional Leagues (PDL)

- Champions League in fall
- Championship Cup is culminating tournament, but for top 12 teams only (not for B teams)
- Washington Youth Soccer purchases travel packages to allow scheduling flexibility for teams that advance beyond Washington State
- Girls 15 and above play in spring, beginning in March, with preliminary rounds in early May

Remaining issues:

- How to tier tryout dates so premier tryouts can be first?
- How to design premier league structure?
- How would current district leagues be administered once Districts are de-emphasized (see 2F below)

Strategy 2D: Create and provide a choice of offerings at the local level that de-emphasize games and emphasize academy/jamboree style training at young ages.

- Various play and training options, especially for ages 8-13
- Allows movement of players to play with other coaches and players
- Allow teams to form for short periods of time (i.e. up to 8 weeks)
- Rotate/redistribute players/teams at ages 4-12; randomize
- Educates parents regarding the greater importance of player and youth development compared to team formation and winning
- Strongly recommend that all associations move toward such offerings at young ages.

Strategy 2E: Foster local decision making as to how to achieve seamless soccer objectives, with support by Washington Youth Soccer

Washington Youth Soccer will work to build the capacity of associations to implement a seamless system to provide developmentally correct playing opportunities for all players with seamless access to, and movement among, leagues, cups and programs.

- Assist in reducing/eliminating administrative barriers,
- Assist in building capacity to resolve local league issues
- Assist in building capacity for associations to resolve conflicts locally
- Provisions for consideration of uniqueness of rural and eastern Washington issues
- Washington Youth Soccer provides technical assistance to associations to strengthen their governance and management systems, and align with state

Strategy 2F: Voluntarily Consolidate Districts and Associations to Improve communication between local and state bodies, reduce duplication of efforts, and allow better focus on capacity building at local level

Objective: Three-year emphasis on reducing number of Associations to a number at which they could coordinate directly with Washington Youth Soccer, and thereby eliminate the need for Districts. While a standard of one association per every 5,000 to 6,500 players may be ideal (i.e. approximately 20 associations), a level of approximately 30 associations may be a more practically achievable target, especially considering the rural nature of most of the state.

Strategy 2D1: Pilot Project(s): Work with District 5 (and possibly a second District) to assist in a model consolidation of associations and clubs, thereby demonstrating the potential gains to be realized.

Strategy 2D2: Identify natural partners: By coordinating closely with District Commissioners, natural partners are already being identified, and additional such partners could be found. In these cases, adjacent associations may have synergies in culture, philosophy and programs, making such consolidations possible.

Strategy 2D3: Enforce a size limitation on associations. Currently, there are 6 associations with under 1,000 members, of which 2 have under 250 members. While these associations generally operate in rural parts of the state, several could become programs of larger associations operating in a nearby region.

Strategy 2G: Create a Soccer Oversight Committee to work with the management staff to oversee the Seamless Soccer system to benefit all levels of play.

Purpose of committee:

- Develop and implement the seamless soccer plan
- Work with senior staff to administer and manage organizational resources and programs to provide support for all levels of play and allow growth of each
- Resolve issues and conflicts between level of play interests

Composition:

- 21 or more members, including:
 - Washington Youth Soccer Executive Director, Director of Coaching, and Director of Member Services and Communications
 - 7 District Commissioners
 - 14 or more additional members from across the state
 - Some administrative leaders
 - Some Directors of Coaching or their designees
 - Have a process for self-nomination of at-large members
 - Regional representation to foster involvement from across state, and avoid inordinate influence from any single organization.
 - Two members of the Washington Youth Soccer Board of Directors will sit as ex-officio chairs of the committee to serve as a liaison to the Board, as required by bylaws.
- Members will be selected for their skills in collaboration and problem solving
- The Board of Directors will establish procedures for membership selection and renewal, subject to the bylaws and operating procedures of the organization.

Structure: Divided into 3 subcommittees:

- Recreational
- Select
- Premier

Meetings

- Retreat culture (problem solving)
- Meets quarterly, possibly more frequently initially to set up systems.
- Full-day or nearly full-day meetings as follows:
 - Portion in subcommittee (Rec, select, premier)

- Portion in full committee to resolve system-wide and inter-level issues
- ❑ Washington Youth Soccer Director of Coaching, Director of Member Services, and Executive Director will serve as facilitators.
- ❑ Decision – making will be on a majority vote basis after discussion to arrive at consensus.
- ❑ Recommendations of actions developed by the Committee
 - Given to the Executive Director for implementation.
 - Reported to the Board of Directors
 - Subject to organization’s budget, bylaws and operating procedures

Goal 3: Develop a Best Practice Board of Directors and Governance System

Strategy 3A. Establish Best Practices Board Structure

Tactic 3.A.1. Insure that board members have the skills and experience to fulfill governance functions by changing the bylaws so that:

- a) The board will be responsible for proposing board nominees with skills and experience in all governance functions including financial management, audit, fundraising, strategic planning, selection and support of the Executive Director, and evaluation of the board, the ED, and program effectiveness. Proposed board members must meet criteria that ensure soccer passion and connection. Board must include geographical and ethnic diversity.
- b) The members (MARs) will vote to elect the board members. The board may fill the final position if it deems it necessary so as to maintain the governance qualifications noted in 2.A.1 above.
- c) The board will elect the officers.
- d) The CEO function shifts from Board President to Executive Director

Tactic 3.A.2. Establish a standing strategic planning committee designated in the Bylaws and reporting to the Board of Directors, with representation from Commissioners, Board and Staff to ensure long range and annual planning reflects knowledge of how to deliver soccer programs.

Tactic 3.A.3. Establish standing governance, audit, financial management and fundraising committees and place board members with appropriate experience on committees to meet strategic plan objectives.

Strategy 3B. Implement a realistic transition plan. From 2008 through 2011, as governance and staff capacity grow to allow a best practice governance system, implement a transition by incrementally making changes as capacity allows.

Tactic 3B1. Separate policy and operational matters, and, as capacity allows, make policy matters the purview of the board and operational matters the purview of the Executive Director, District commissioners, staff and committees.

Tactic 3B2. Eliminate VPs of Recreation, Competition, Development, and Administration in 2009

Strategy 3C. Develop an annual audit process and committee

Goal 4: Develop & Continuously Improve the Washington Youth Soccer Staff and Operational Capacity

Strategy 4A: Develop and support relevant Operating Committees that effectively guide the soccer system

Build volunteer, operating committees that are designed to provide high-level and comprehensive input and guidance for staff in framing & developing soccer policies and programs, as follows:

Committees that function well, need little change:

- Disciplinary
- Ethics
- Appeals

Committees that need significant change, as part of the development of a seamless soccer opportunity system:

- Rules
 - o Revised rules committee will develop more policy and philosophically driven rules by 2009
- Recreation: Becomes a subcommittee within the larger soccer oversight committee (see strategy 2G, page 16)
- Competition: Divided into select and premier subcommittees within the soccer oversight committee (see strategy 2G, page 16)

Committees that require some changes:

- TOPSoccer: Provide a path for TOPSoccer players to work their way into the mainstream recreational program
- Soccer Start
 - o Tactic = Employ consultant with experience setting up similar programs
- Mediation – use volunteers for occasional need for mediation
- Community soccer committee for event participation in the communities

Strategy 4B: Develop & Strengthen District Commissioners' and Soccer Oversight Committee's capacity for the following responsibilities

- Soccer policies, in conjunction with the Executive Director
- Determining who administers current District leagues
- Facilitating communications between Washington Youth Soccer and local associations
- Insuring equitable services, support and resource allocation across all districts. However, the ED will retain decision making authority on issues in which there seems to be a disparity between the districts as to how these programs and services are delivered.
- For District Commissioners and the ED to collectively appoint members to the rules committee.

- To oversee the following Strategic Change Plan Objectives:
 - Develop a Seamless Soccer Opportunity System
 - Increase support for districts, associations and clubs
 - Develop an organizational culture and systems that provides adequate data for decision making, program monitoring and evaluation
- Provide staff support to Districts as stated under goals 5 & 6

Strategy 4C: Build a staff, commensurate with the budget, to implement the totality of this plan

- Add 2 senior staff in calendar year 2009, including a high-level position for District communications
- Staff will gather input from Commissioners and Operating Committees in order to frame soccer policy issues and propose policy and program solutions for Commissioners. Staff will be responsible for implementing programs.
- Equitable services, support and resource allocation across all districts
- Cross train staff so multiple staff are available to cover all functions, provide more consistent support for members, and provide evening and weekend support for members
- Staff development; professional development, feedback and evaluation, including 360-degree evaluations for all staff
- Continue to add staff positions as allowed by the budget and as necessary to professionally implement this plan

Goal 5: Develop an organizational culture and systems for regular data gathering, program monitoring and evaluation

Objective: Board and Executive Director decisions are based on sound data gathered from a representative sample of the membership

Strategy 5A: Governance committee of board of directors will develop and oversee an evaluation process of the board of directors, the Executive Director and Committees

Tactic: Governance committee will implement an annual self-evaluation according to the broad principles outlined by *BoardSource*

Tactic: Governance committee will implement an annual 360-degree evaluation of the Executive Director, including input from staff, committees, and association members

Tactic: Governance committee will implement an annual evaluation of each committee's effectiveness

Strategy 5B: Staff will perform an annual membership survey and other market research as necessary to ascertain factors affecting Washington Youth Soccer membership level, perception of services, suggestions for service improvements, etc

Tactic: Partner with a University to do a sports psychology study of thousands of Washington Youth Soccer players to determine why they make particular choices regarding playing soccer, leaving soccer, etc.

Strategy 5C: Strategic Planning Committee will continuously monitor and suggest improvements to programs, systems

Tactic: Executive Director will provide monthly reports to the Board of Directors regarding operations and program delivery.

Tactic: Strategic planning committee will coordinate with executive director to guide implementation of needed data gathering and program monitoring

Goal 6: Improve Washington Youth Soccer Communications and Operating Systems

Objectives

- Communications with members that are internally consistent, more transparent, and provide faster information on latest issues and responses to questions**
- Convey to parents the relative importance of player development as compared to competition, especially at developmental ages of 10-13, to allow kids to have fun and develop at age-appropriate pace**

Communication Principles

Foster Pride in Club and Association: Shift player and parent perception and attitude regarding competition and winning toward an increasing recognition in the importance of player and child development. Foster and promote the value of, and pride in, their club and association to a larger extent, instead of so much emphasis and pride in team results. Such a shift in communication and values will help to balance a disproportionate emphasis on winning that permeates the soccer world (as well as many other U.S. systems and activities!).

One action that would foster such a shift is to change player registration to be at the association level, thereby allowing player movement within recreational play, across teams.

Integrate coaching and administrative communication: At all levels of administration (state, district, association and club) communicate and coordinate all soccer issues, changes and decisions including both administrative leadership & channels and coaching leadership & channels in the form of a memo a) stating/framing the problem or barrier, and b) providing one or more potential solutions.

Communicate through Enough Channels to Comprehensively Solve the Problem: If you see an opportunity to create more flexibility for players and/or to have more soccer play options, communicate the suggestion in the form of a memo to four people: Your District Commissioner, and Washington Youth Soccer's Executive Director, Director of Member Services, & Coaching Director, a) stating the problem or barrier, b) describing its implications and c) providing one or more options for potential solutions that apply existing or potential new seamless soccer principles. This way, all levels of the system can collaborate to solve the problem comprehensively, without unintended consequences.

Strategy 6A: Educate and clarify expectations for each level of play to parents, players and coaches

- Address egos, lack of realism to parents (i.e. your child fits the beginning development skill level and is not advanced)**

- Educate regarding new system; build pride in system; reduce emphasis on teams and winning; foster emphasis on youth development
- Manage expectations
- Guide parents and players toward academy-style, coach-the-coach or other training options to de-emphasize winning and emphasize player development
- Let local organizations decide how to educate and incentivize
- Educate coaches at premier and select levels to honor USSF best practices and limit maximum number of games

Strategy 6B: Convey importance of youth and player development to parents and coaches, especially of players age 13 and under, in order to create incentives for training, and de-emphasize competition

- Educate parents regarding what players need to learn
- Apply USSF best practices for coaching
- Educate and incentivize coaches to move players with recognized talent up in skill level. Disincentivize coaches for retaining players who should be moved up.
- Educate parents that travelling away from their home area to find the most competitive team for ages 4 to approximately 13 is inappropriate. Strongly recommend playing in home association for recreational play up to age 13.
- Manage expectations
- Let local organizations decide how to educate and incentivize

Strategy 6C: Improve specific communications with members

- Provide advance notification of press releases and other communications to District Commissioners
- Provide enhanced communications followup with members following press releases and other outreach efforts
- Address potential of better use of email
- Staff work with each District and Association to migrate everyone to the same data system for communication purposes
- Accommodate people who don't have email. One option is to provide venues that will allow that to happen
- Provide video conferencing hardware for Board Members & District Commissioners to streamline communications and avoid travel time and expense
- Send out Executive Summaries of Board meeting minutes and Commissioner meeting minutes to each District and Association

Strategy 6D: Upgrade and broadly apply technology

- Continuously improve Bonzi and provide staff support to allow user friendly application at local level. Improve functions such as import-export, matchups, etc.
- Upgrade website based on member feedback
- Make information available on Bonzi for districts in cases where it avoids duplication and saves time and effort, such as player registration information for players within that district

- Synchronize state website and district websites
- Explore single source database for emails

Strategy 6E: Develop Communications Policy

- Marketing message: *“The game for all kids!”*

Strategy 6F: Address new level of play terminology

- Local, Developmental and regional play
- Educate members

Goal 7: Increase support for districts, associations and clubs to most effectively deliver services that benefit players

Objective

Clearly delineate responsibilities between Washington Youth Soccer staff and District stakeholders to clarify and streamline how work will get done, while retaining flexibility of local administration.

Strategy 7A: Increase staff support

- Add 2 senior staff in calendar year 2009, including a high-level position for District communications
- State staff provide assistance for Districts and Associations to build their capacity to manage their programs and problem-solve at the local level. Respond to leadership and staff issues as requested. Have significant face time at both Washington Youth Soccer and District offices to align systems and solve problems.
- Have Washington Youth Soccer staff available after hours to provide member support, including use of Bonzi

Strategy 7B: Make state staff and resources more accessible; utilize local resources most efficiently

- Identify and provide hardware tools required at district level
- Although face to face meetings are preferred, provide technology support to supplement and increase communications
- Review state and district responsibilities to determine which matters can be handled most efficiently by districts vs state organization. For example, should districts approve travel in certain circumstances?

Strategy 7C: Complete best practices manual and maintain as current, regarding both administrative and soccer matters

Goal 8: Streamline Rules for ease of use and understanding

Objectives & Targets

- Reduce number of appeals, grievances etc. due to lack of clarity by X% by 2012**
- Increase member satisfaction with system**

Timeline

June 2009:

- 1) Complete the re-organization of the existing document
- 2) Identify to the Board and membership our determinations of which items should be retained, eliminated or re-written.

December 2009:

- 1) Complete the re-organization of our Operating Documents which includes all re-writes that are needed.
- 2) Present the recommendation

Strategy 8A: Develop and maintain policy- and principle-based rules

- 1) Guiding principles in rules changes:
 - a) Make the documents user friendly. Leverage technology.
 - b) Simplify when possible and feasible.
 - c) Keep all "pieces" of a topic together so that people aren't flipping between sections trying to follow the logic of a topic.
 - d) Eliminate redundancy.

- 2) Recognize these are Operating Documents not Governing Documents, covering the running of the soccer program, not the board of directors or governance systems. There will be three primary categories of documents created, as well as sections that provide user-friendly information about WSYSA, levels of competition, definitions, etc:
 - A. Policies
 - B. Procedures
 - C. Rules of the Game

Strategy 8B: Expand function of rules committee to include development and maintenance of policies and principle-based rules. District Commissioners select rules committee members, which will report to the Executive Director

Goal 9: Increase and Diversify Washington Youth Soccer Revenues

Objectives

- Revenue stability
- \$1M in annual new revenues by 2013
- Reduced pressure on player fees

Strategy 9A: Develop board and staff with capacity for major and corporate donor development

Tactic: Build a board of directors with significant experience in partner and donor development and major and corporate donor fundraising

Tactic: Retain an Executive Director with significant experience in partner and donor development and fundraising

Tactic: Hire an experienced Development Director by 2010

Strategy 9B: Develop Relationships with Foundation and Corporate Partners:

Expand and develop existing and new relationships with natural partners such as Sounders FC, national and regional soccer and athletic federations, US Soccer Foundation, Foundations including educational foundations, corporations and corporate foundations, especially those with products and/or an interest in youth sports and youth development.

Strategy 9C: Develop major (individual) donor giving campaign

Tactic: 100% of board members make an annual gift

Tactic: Development director to work with fundraising committee to develop and implement a major donor campaign by 2010 or 2011

Tactic: Develop plan for major fundraising event

Goal 10: Manage resources wisely

Strategy 10A: Improve Asset Management for the benefit of members

- Acquire ownership and/or access to additional playfields for Washington Youth Soccer and/or members.
 - Provide low-interest loans to facilitate building and improving fields
- Invest net revenues in money market funds and CDs to maximize security of assets
- Have new board reevaluate use of assets beginning when seated in 2009

Strategy 10B: Manage budget for the benefit of membership by keeping overhead down, investing in services and programs that benefit districts & associations

- Acquire ownership and/or access to additional playfields for Washington Youth Soccer and/or members.
 - Provide low-interest loans to members to facilitate building and improving fields
- Increase support for districts, associations and clubs to most effectively deliver services that benefit players
- Improve communications across and within all levels of Washington Youth Soccer

Strategy 10C: Develop and provide relevant, user-friendly and transparent budget & financial reports

- Post budget on web site
- Simplify budget format by defining approximately five lines of business for all 13+ existing programs into (i.e. player development, recreational soccer, competitive soccer, communications & education, and soccer supports)
- Add explanatory notes
- Make entire accounting system format consistent across all documents and reports

Strategy 10D: Manage Risk

- Maintain risk management program, including Bonzi, to maintain best-practice within USYSA
- Maintain secondary health insurance for members from on-field injury
 - Strive for 100% player and club registration to allow insurance coverage
- Address State Referees Committee; i.e. are they a part of Washington Youth Soccer or will they be divested?

Strategy 10E: Maintain financial stability by retaining a minimum of 5 months operating reserves; gradually growing reserves in the future

- Membership dues and fees are all reinvested in programs that benefit members
- Any growth in reserves to come from excess of private contributions
- New board will reevaluate financial management policies