

# Michigan State Developmental Soccer League



*Improving Youth Soccer in Michigan*




# The Current State of Youth Soccer in Michigan – Problems that Plague the Game

- Too Many Games Over Too Many Weekends
  - Families are forced to sacrifice valuable family time in order to play games every weekend each season.
  - League-imposed schedules force teams to play upwards of 12 games per season, on top of tournaments and friendly matches.



# The Current State of Youth Soccer in Michigan – Problems that Plague the Game

- Too Much Emphasis on Results
    - Coaches and teams are forced to sacrifice certain areas of player development – encouraging creativity, playing multiple positions, etc – in order to win games.
    - Promotion to a higher division or relegation to a lower division becomes the primary goal instead of developing players.
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# The Current State of Youth Soccer in Michigan – Problems that Plague the Game

- Rigid Roster Rules
  - Teams are forced to designate players on the “A” team or “B” team while they’re still developing, which can negatively impact a player’s growth.
  - Players need the opportunity to play with and against a variety of competition, creating the right combination of success and challenges.



# The Current State of Youth Soccer in Michigan – Problems that Plague the Game

- Poaching and Recruiting
  - The recruitment of players who are already committed to a team (poaching) is far too prevalent in youth soccer.
  - Instead of focusing on developing their players' skill, creativity and vision, coaches have to worry about protecting their players from organizations trying to “steal” them.

"Kids football is all about the individual loving the game: dribbling and shooting, playing games and scoring goals, experimenting and copying. It is very simple and lots of fun. Adult football is all about the team and results. It is physical, tactical, complicated and very serious."

- Tom Statham - Manchester United Academy



# The Solution...





# Mission Statement

- The purpose of the Michigan State Developmental Soccer League is to provide the best environment for the development of youth soccer players below the age of 12 through a league environment that encourages fun, creativity and competitiveness.





## MSDSL Objectives

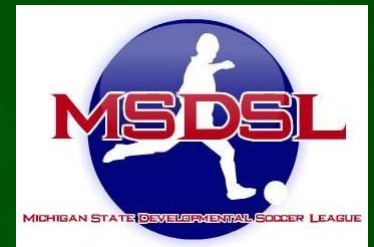
- To reduce the emphasis and pressure on players and coaches to earn results.
- To emphasize individual player development and especially individual technical development.





## MSDSL Objectives

- To reduce the excessive travel around the state for games and reduce the number of weekend match dates, increasing valuable time for families.
- To reduce the possibilities of mismatched opponents and lopsided scores by allowing clubs to do their own divisioning.





# MSDSL Benefits

- Free and open player movement within the club's teams.
- Growing a 'CLUB' concept with a loyalty to and acknowledgement of the club, as opposed to individual team mentality – players and families are part of something bigger than their individual team.
- Professional coaches taking over administration and training of younger ages.





## MSDSL Benefits

- Increased player enrollment and participation in the club.
- Increased pool of players for age groups with improvement in quality of players.
- A better introduction to 'Select' competitive soccer for players preparing for state and region-wide leagues and events in their future years.





## MSDSL – What is it?

- The Michigan State Developmental Soccer League is a competitive league for girls and boys ages U8 through U12. The league offers 6v6, 8v8, and 11v11 divisions based on age and playing ability. It is the first league specifically designed for player development, organized by soccer professionals.





## MSDSL – Why does it exist?

- To improve the player development environment; the foundation of good habits in older age players is built in the youngest age groups.
- The current state of youth soccer places an inordinate emphasis on results (winning and losing), forcing coaches, players and parents to sacrifice elements of player development in favor of team performance.





## MSDSL – Why does it exist?

- When game results are overemphasized, individual player development becomes a secondary focus, as teams are more concerned with how results may promote them or relegate them to a different division.





## MSDSL – Why does it exist?

- The MSDSL places individual player development at its forefront.
- Its focus is long-term development -- which affords players the opportunity to make and learn from mistakes in a game, and to play multiple positions -- without worrying about short-term success.





# MSDSL – How will it accomplish this goal?

- Increasing roster fluidity with a club pass-card system
  - Sign players to an organization, not a team.
  - One pass card per player.
  - Players compete for any age-appropriate team within their organization, and may play up an age group.
  - Allows coaches to place players in a variety of playing environments, granting the players the right combination of success and challenges.





# MSDSL – How will it accomplish this goal?

- Increasing the size of player pools
  - Smaller roster-size minimums allow for more players to participate by creating more teams.
  - The club pass-card system will remedy any small-roster issues on match day.
  - The 12th player will no longer be cut for an 11-player 6v6 roster – more players can now participate.





# MSDSL – How will it accomplish this goal?

- Eliminating results-based promotion and relegation.
  - Club DOC's will organize divisions.
  - Results are a factor but not *the* factor.
- Allowing dual-registration with teams outside of this league.
  - Grants talented U12 players the opportunity to play with a U13 MSPSP team from their club.



# MSDSL – Who is in it?

- Several of the most recognized, successful and pioneering soccer clubs in Michigan with track records of developing players, including the Michigan Jaguars, TNT Dynamite (Lansing), Livonia City Soccer Club, Force FC (Bloomfield), Canton Celtic, and Waza F.C. (Livonia)



LCSC





## MSDSL – When does it take place?

- League play consists of two seasons: fall and spring, and each season consists of 8-10 games per team.
- The fall season begins in August and concludes in November; the spring season begins in April and concludes in June.
- The league's inaugural season kicks off August 2009.





## MSDSL – Where are the games played?

- Most if not all games will be played on Match Days, when clubs will travel to one site, and each team will play two games.
- Match Days will take place over approximately four Saturdays each season.
- Clubs petition to host Match Days, with venues determined by size, quality and quantity of fields, and geography.





## MSDSL – Where are the games played?

- Games not played on Match Days will be scheduled as One-offs (self-scheduled matches between the two teams).
- An end-of-season event/tournament may be held for all participating clubs to attend.





# Playing Formats for Boys and Girls

- U8: 6v6
- U9: 6v6
- U10: 6v6 and 8v8
- U11: 8v8
- U12: 8v8 and 11v11 (U13Y)



# MSYSA Sanctioned

- The league will be sanctioned by the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association.
- All players must be registered in the MSDSL by their member clubs.
- No guest players from outside the league are permitted in league events.





# MSDSL Operation and Governance

- The MSDSL will be a limited liability corporation (LLC) organized to promote elite youth soccer and player development.
- A seasonal league fee will be assessed to each individual team registered into the league by its member clubs.
- A formalized league budget will be approved by the league's Board of Directors.





# MSDSL Board of Directors

- 6-member Board of Directors – 1 member from each club.
- BOD members must be a representative, employee, officer or director of a MSDSL club.
- BOD terms are two years – officer positions are determined by an internal vote within the BOD.
- League Commissioner (employee, non-voting) responsible for day-to-day operation of league.





# MSDSL Commissioner and BOD

- Commissioner Decisions and Responsibilities:
  - Recommendation of rules, policies and procedures to membership.
  - Enforcement of rules, policies and procedures.
  - Management and operation of the MSDSL.





# MSDSL Commissioner and BOD

- Board of Directors Decisions and Responsibilities:
  - Admission of any new club into the MSDSL.
  - Change in league competition format.
  - Approval of the MSDSL budget.
  - Rescinding the membership of any MSDSL club.
  - Negotiation of contracts with third parties for league operation and administration.





# Year 1 Objectives and Action Plan



- 6-member Board of Directors (founding or charter clubs)
- 1 League Commissioner
- Sanctioning with MSYSA and LLC status with State of Michigan
- Develop user-friendly player registration system and league website
- Divisioning by BOD
- Agreed rules and playing format: Match Days and league playoff
- Limited acceptance and inclusion of non-charter clubs

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